

Adding Water to the Soup Pot: Finding Resources for Your Festival

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There is no universal way to fundraise for a human rights film festival. A great deal depends on the concrete circumstances in each country, the nature of the festival and the characteristics, experience and capacity of the organisation in charge of planning the event. Being a successful fundraiser is knowing how to search for in-kind donations, develop a diverse financial portfolio and be creative with budgets and resources. In essence, many human rights festivals, especially those in the developing world, are excellent at doing a lot with very little.

Organising a festival in a relatively wealthy democratic country is one story: chances are you will have access to various domestic and international foundations and endowments, as well as public funds from national and regional governments. You will probably not face ethical or political issues in accepting public funding, nor be harassed by authorities or criticised by local media for taking funding from foreign donors.

It is a very different story if you are in a country with a non-democratic, corrupt or otherwise problematic

government from which you cannot take any funding without seriously compromising your mission and message.

Festivals taking place in middle and low-income countries and in those seriously hit by financial crises face the challenge of having little access to national and local government grants. These festivals strive to find financing elsewhere and stretch small budgets to the fullest.

Here we want to share some of our experiences and go over some basic fundraising rules. Some of our approaches may not be applicable, but hopefully some of them will spark ideas that you can modify and apply. We have provided a short explanation about the different kinds of sources. You will also find an example of a budget and how these costs will most likely change over time. We end this chapter with a summary of our main tips.

Basic Fundraising Rules

Develop your strategy and write your project plan.

If your festival is just starting out we recommend you conduct research on existing human rights film festi-

vals and contact some for advice and feedback on the kind of festival that you envision. Many of these festivals are familiar with other starting festivals. You can also contact the Human Rights Film Network (HRFN) for advice. The HRFN is not just a cultural organisation; it is a global community for festivals to get feedback and advice, network, partner and defend the filmmaking community from human rights violations. (See www.humanrightsfilmnetwork.org).

There are also numerous documents online that offer tips on how to set up and finance film festivals. While each festival has different needs, you are sure to find information that can be useful to your own event.

You will need to define your goals and project set-up and make an estimation of the costs. Develop a project plan with clearly formulated and well-structured ideas, including a timetable.

In general, a project plan includes at least: general and specific objectives; information about your targeted groups; political and social context; expected outcome and evaluation plans; programme description; production/logistical plan; publicity plan; budget (including costs and benefits); financing plan; material and personnel needs (staff/volunteers); and outlook for the future (3-5 years).

Try to be as concrete as possible. If known, include which (kinds of) films you aim to select and why, how many screenings you will organise, what type

of guests you will invite, as well as additional events such as roundtables, concerts, exhibits, trainings,

Spend time drawing up a clear, realistic and detailed budget. Estimate your costs carefully and explain how you came up with the numbers so donors and sponsors know exactly what they are subsidising. Also specify your benefits, your other sources of income and the status (confirmed or pending). Try to include an amount in your budget for unexpected costs. Please note that the total expected costs should be the same amount as the total expected benefits.

You can find an example of an application form that is used by Movies that Matter Support Programme through this link: <http://goo.gl/qOa6dK>

You can find an example of a budget here: <http://goo.gl/yAUuaD>

Find suitable financial sources

The sources to finance your festival can be categorised as follows:

- Foreign funds and donors (governments, foundations, international agencies, etc.)
- Domestic funds and donors (non-governmental)
- Public sector (local or national government)
- Corporate sponsors and in-kind
- Individual donations, benefit events and crowd-funding
- Box office, advertising, merchandising and other sources



Good festival posters are always enjoyed by young festival visitors. Photo: Archive of Karama HRFF.

You will find a short explanation per category below.

Diversify your sources

A human rights film festival's funding portfolio usually changes considerably over the years, in large part because donors tend to leave projects after a few years, seeking new ones to fund. Thus, a good diversification of sources is important to secure the continuity of your project. Even if you achieve an initial level of success with a donor, do not rely exclusively on the longevity of that relationship, but instead start to work on identifying additional funders. A good mix between local and international funding is ideal whenever possible. Many funders like to support projects that have diverse portfolios, so this may have a positive influence in their assessment of your proposal.

For many festivals in the developing world, support from foreign funds and donors is the most important source of income for the first years. Start with small funds and use your track record (evaluation of re-

sults and impact) to convince donors to invest larger sums. After a couple of years, local support from domestic funds and donors, including local and national governments and foundations, tends to increase.

However, the economic crisis has severely affected many governments' cultural budgets, reducing this kind of support notably. Individual donations and box office revenues (if applicable) may become part of a festival's income too. For festivals in Europe and the US it is often the other way around: domestic funds precede foreign funding.

Below you will find a table of the funding portfolio of twenty randomly selected human rights film festivals from all over the world categorised by the number of years that the festival exists.

A film festival in a developing country is often more likely to succeed in funding its first edition(s) by applying for resources from international funds already

	<5yrs	<10yrs	>10yrs
Box office, advertising and other sources	0%	3%	4%
Foreign funds and donors	88%	76%	25%
Domestic funds and donors	4%	2%	35%
Public sector (national / local government)	6%	15%	21%
Corporate sponsors and in-kind	1%	3%	11%
Individual donations	1%	1%	6%

operating in that country, as well as some foreign embassies. These entities will be particularly interested in knowing what impact the event may have on targeted audiences, especially if it coincides with their strategic goals in that country. Partnering with local NGOs working on the issues your festival addresses not only can improve the event and its impact; it can also help obtain funding from international entities whose work also focuses on these issues.

For a festival in a more prosperous country, aim for domestic funds and funding from the public sector, as these will most probably become the core of your funding portfolio over time.

Funding Sources

Whether you are searching for grants, donations or in-kind contributions, the key to successful festival fundraising is to identify the right funders and supporters for your project. All aspects of your festival—from programming and activities, to target audiences, to social and political context, to specific issues addressed by the festival—will guide you in this process. The first step is to know your strengths, limitations and characteristics well enough so that you can target entities and people that best suit your project and organisation.

Human rights film festivals can be seen as cultural events, but also as social or educational projects. Some funders are more inclined towards projects that focus on gender; others emphasise democ-

racy-building or the environment; yet others prefer supporting projects that work on peace-building or include a training component. Some funders specifically exclude supporting advocacy work, which can be a tricky concept to define.

The nature of your organisation, including its legal status and the country where you are based, is also an important factor when identifying funds and donors. Some donors only support projects organised by non-profits; others donate to organisations that have a track record of some years. Some donor organisations have priority regions and countries and exclude others. Many individual donors (including in-kind) prefer to donate tax-free, so if your organisation does not offer that status you may need a fiscal sponsor—an organisation that can accept tax-free donations on your behalf and then charges you a percentage. This is especially true if you are seeking funding and other resources in the United States.

For some festivals that have multiple activities it sometimes helps to package programming so that each donor or supporter can choose which aspect they would prefer to support. For instance, gender-specific screenings and activities, a youth filmmaking workshop or an event around truth and reconciliation can be budgeted and packaged separately and presented to donors interested in supporting that specific activity.

As you search for the most adequate funders it is helpful to look at their past grantees because their

grant description and guidelines may not describe fully the range of projects they cover.

Foreign funds and donors

Foreign funding comes in different shapes and sizes. Some grant programmes that may fund human rights film festivals focus on building awareness on human rights, strengthening civil society, fostering dialogue, peace and/or reconciliation and promoting active citizenship. Depending on your festival's focus and target groups, you can look for programmes that promote gender equality, support ethnic, racial and other groups facing discrimination, and/or protect the environment. If your festival also aims to provide media or film training, look for programmes and organisations that support these activities. Browsing the sponsor pages of similar film festival catalogues and websites will offer some inspiration.

Some well-known funders are Bertha Foundation, BRITDOC, Open Society Institute, National Endowment for Democracy, Ford Foundation, EU delegation programmes, Arab Fund for Arts and Culture, European Commission programmes and UN agencies. Movies that Matter's Support Programme offers small grants for starting film festivals.

Depending on the region where you are located, there are also regional cultural funds available from international foundations, UN and European agencies and programmes, etc., that specify groups of countries covered.

Embassies

Some embassies and foreign cultural institutes can help you cover screening fees and translation costs for films, as well as the travel and accommodation of guests from their countries, or promotion. Some even offer screening venues, such as their cultural institutes. The British, French, German, Canadian, Danish, Dutch, Norwegian, Swedish, Czech and sometimes US embassies have shown their support in the past. Some even have specific programs and grants intended to support civil society development. Make sure that these agreements come with no political strings attached that may compromise your festival's freedom of expression.

Embassies can also support you in other ways if you are working in an environment that is not fully free and democratic. For instance, an embassy's participation could provide you with a certain level of protection. If films from their countries are screened, embassies have an excuse to become involved without being accused by unfriendly local authorities of meddling in internal domestic affairs or violating the country's sovereignty. Ambassadors might show up at the screening of a film from his/her country or might even host a small reception afterwards. It may help to photograph these diplomats at the event with the guests they helped to bring and then share these images publicly.

Non-governmental organisations

Some (international) NGOs operating in your country might have funds that could help you if you offer films,

debates and public awareness activities about topics they deal with. They may also offer in-kind support, such as providing venues, good debate subjects or needed services for your event. Partnering with NGOs may also help you attract funding from other sources.

Domestic funds and donors

Domestic funds are often distributed through the various levels of state government, through the individual ministries' granting programs or through publicly funded agencies, regional governments and/or municipal governments. Domestic funds can also come from private foundations (like Ford Foundation or Soros Foundation) or lottery revenues.

Public sector (national and local government)

Depending on the political situation in your region, you can check whether your government offers public funds for your project. Most democratically elected national governments and city councils (in countries with resources) have developed specific funding mechanisms that provide support to cultural events and civic initiatives. Ministries of Culture may support a film festival, but so might a Health Ministry if there is emphasis on health issues, the Ministry of Education if trainings are involved or if you plan to work with schools, the Environmental Ministry if you are dealing with the environment, etc. If your festival has a gender component look for funding from governmental entities that focus on women's rights; likewise, if the rights of specific groups (Indigenous, Afro-descendant, Roma) are involved, contact agencies and min-

istries working with these communities. Regional and local governments may also fund cultural activities, particularly if they have a positive impact on local populations or lend a positive (international) image to their region or city. You can try to convince local governments that the festival brings visitors and media attention to the town.

Universities, film schools, film institutes

You may be able to get sponsorship, support or in-kind donations from some universities, film schools and film institutes interested in your festival's focus. This is especially the case if your festival offers film workshops.

Corporate sponsors and in-kind support

Getting corporate sponsors on board, particularly large ones, is not usually an easy task. Human rights are hard to sell to big companies. Many do not like to deal with or be associated with issues that are political, critical or controversial. High audience numbers and substantial media and marketing visibility are vital in order to attract sponsors. The exception are those companies or businesses who are sensitised to socially responsible practices and may be interested in supporting this type of event. Smaller local businesses may also be more amenable since they do not have to answer to boards or shareholders.

Commercial sponsors' support can be very valuable, as their funding is not usually earmarked for a specific objective or part of the project. In exchange for their support, corporate sponsors expect you to deliver on



Award Ceremony of Movies that Matter Festival 2013, with award winners, protagonists, festival director and a City Council Member from the municipality of The Hague. Photo: Archive of Movies that Matter.

agreed-upon levels of marketing and media visibility—not just to sell their brand or product, but also to improve their image.

For many film festivals, in-kind support from corporate sponsors and local businesses is much easier to obtain. It may be more feasible for smaller businesses to contribute with a free or discounted good or service (free lunches for the team, transportation, lodging, discounted printing services, etc.), rather than by providing monetary grants. These contributions may also include the use of venues, technical equipment, production of T-shirts, etc. In exchange, these supporters will probably want their logo on your website and catalogue, as well as other types of visibility.

You should pick your sponsors with care and make sure you research their practices and record, both at home and internationally. They should have a good reputation in terms of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), which spans the range from fair labour practices to respect for the environment. There are organisations that monitor the CSR of larger corporations, so for information on them you can search their websites.

Stay away from corporate sponsors that have the reputation of being human rights violators—accepting support from them will damage your festival's credibility. Some corporate human rights violators have established foundations, often with misleading names, that help them “cleanse” their image by giv-

ing a lot of money to social projects. Beware of taking funds that only help to launder a violator's image.

Individual donations and crowdfunding

Financial support from individuals is becoming an increasingly important source of income for the film festival circuit. More and more festivals work with a circle of “friends”—individuals who donate annually a small (or large) amount to the festival. For example, both the Cine Institute in Haiti and Film Aid International in Kenya have managed to secure these private donors in wealthier countries.

Offer these friends something exclusive such as a special preview screening; invite them to an opening or closing event or a meet-and-greet with one of the filmmakers to keep them engaged with your festival. You can also organise a benefit party with their support. You should acknowledge their support on your website unless they wish to remain anonymous.

Crowdfunding has proved to be a very useful tool for the production of films. It is usually employed by a new project or product that would probably not be realised without the support of these funders. A start-up festival with a unique focus may be able to move the public to contribute but keep in mind that it will depend on your circle of contacts and your ability to inspire them, that it is not a stable form of funding, that the costs of the rewards and the percentage given to the platform can add up, and that it generates a lot of work for your team. Crowdfunding

has not generally been applicable to recurrent film festivals.

Box office sales, advertising, benefit events and other sources

This is usually a very small part of your income, if any. Still, it is important to make an effort to generate your own sources of income.

Some festivals choose to sell tickets; some don't simply because their target group would not be able to afford them.

One World in Czech Republic shares the revenues of the box office with cinemas instead of paying for rental space.

Another way to generate income is to sell advertising space in your publicity materials such as the catalogue. You can also offer this space for those who offer in-kind support. For instance, restaurants who cater to the festival, a company that loans screening equipment, a cinema or other entity that lends their space for free, etc.

Merchandising may also be a source of revenue: the sale of festival T-shirts, catalogues, bags or other items to your audience. You can sell these at the festival but also through your website.

Benefit concerts and other events require effort but can also generate funds and give media visibility to

your festival. For instance, FiSahara has been able to generate some funding with an annual benefit concert.

The Funding Process

Getting acquainted and applying for a grant

After you have found suitable funding or sponsor options, make sure to double-check their guidelines, criteria and regulations. What exactly does this organisation subsidise? Is it applicable to your project? You should also review their regulations carefully—especially when it comes to deadlines and timeline conditions. This last point is very important, as many funders establish a starting and ending point for the funding and so your project must take place within those dates. Most funders have a limited number of granting rounds per year. Check if these coincide with your own planning and the execution of your project.

Some funders specifically earmark their funds for screenings, roundtables, special guests, workshops, promotion or other activities. Many do not support operating year-round costs (office rental and expenses, personnel, etc.). Diversification also allows you to cover different needs.

Sometimes it is worthwhile sending potential funders a short introductory email, or else calling or visiting them in person if they are within your reach. This is especially useful if you have questions or doubts about your application. You could also consider in-



Selling festival T-shirts could contribute to festival resources. Photo: Archive of Freedom Film Fest.

viting them to the opening of your festival and offer them free passes to screenings. If a potential or actual sponsor comes to your festival make sure you help them plan their visit and organise their schedule.

Some funders accept applications by invitation only. If you are interested in a funder of this type because you believe that they would like your project, look at their funding portfolio to see if you recognise grantee projects or organisations that you already know and who know you and/or your work. Ask them to introduce you.

Writing the application is a crucial step that can be long and arduous, especially with complex grants like those offered by the EU. Present your project plan according to the language and framework of each donor's guidelines and mandate. This does not mean that you have to compromise on content, but that you should not neglect the specific selection criteria and regulations involved in each fundraising procedure.

Some funds work with standard entry forms; if so, use them. Use the required currency (dollar, dinar, euro, peso, etc.). Be consistent and stick to the allotted maximum and minimum number of words.

Finally, your sponsors will want to see results after your project has ended. Therefore, make sure you formulate clear, measurable indicators and an evaluation methodology that will make it possible to identify concrete results later on.

Developing a relationship

Once your project has been selected for a grant, invest in a relationship with your donors. Share your successes but also your failures. Be transparent. The credibility of your organisation is vital for their continued support. Always inform them when your project suffers changes or when your budget differs from the initial plan. Some donors can be very helpful and offer advice, feedback and sometimes networking possibilities. Often these funders have gathered a lot of experience and knowledge.

What do you offer your donors? Include their logo on your publicity material, including website and catalogue. Invite them to your festival (and be sure to let them know if you cannot afford to cover their travel and hotel expenses). If appropriate or required, invite them to give a talk or participate in a panel discussion. This will both enhance their visibility and make them truly part of the festival experience. If they do not come, send them the catalogue and some festival merchandising along with the final report. Stay in touch; if you publish a periodic newsletter make sure to send it to them.

Last but not least, remain independent. It is always good to search for shared goals, but the festival organiser has the final say in the set-up of the event and the content of the programme.

Evaluate and report

It's the end of the project. Check if there are specif-

ic requirements for your evaluation report and how much time you have for handing it in to your sponsor. In general, the report presents an account of all of your project activities, as well as the results achieved as compared to those stated in the original application. Write down what went well, but also be honest about what went wrong; for instance if you did not achieve all your stated goals. Make sure you are brief, specific and precise.

A good evaluation report includes: a description of the event and original objectives; the exact outcomes (for example, the number of visitors, participation in specific events, amount of media attention); lessons learned; and follow-up plans. If your event is for “new audiences” you should evaluate very specifically the full experience of the audience.

Whenever possible, have your team note down numbers of attendees, conduct questionnaires of a select number of participants (targeted audiences, guests and other participants) and use a mix of quantitative and qualitative indicators (How many people came? Did they stay for the full screening and debate afterwards? Did they enjoy the screening? Were they able to read the subtitles? Did they participate or seem engaged in the debate? What did they take from the event?).

Usually, the financial report should deal with the entire project, not just the part of the expenses covered with the grant.

It is also important to include photos, videos or newspaper articles on the event. Your communication team is the key to assembling a full final report that includes visuals, media coverage, quotes from participants, etc. Many festivals publish their reports on their websites like the Manya Human Rights Film Festival in Uganda or the One World Festival in the Czech Republic. For more information you can read our Evaluation chapter.

Guidelines for the Final Report for Grantees of the Movies that Matter Support Programme

In the final report, the applicant presents as brief and detailed as possible an account of the activities undertaken and the results achieved. All this with reference to the enclosed project plan. The report contains the following:

- *A short content-based report about the project, including:*
 - *Overview film programme, including gender of filmmakers*
 - *Number and kind of public debates initiated as a result of film screenings and related activities*
 - *Number of visitors of the event*
 - *Background and the estimated gender balance of the visitors*
 - *Reactions of visitors about the festival*
 - *Attention and reactions of the media (both qualitative and quantitative). Please send us the publications if available.*
 - *Effects of the event (also which you did not expect beforehand)*

- *What went very well? What went moderately? What went wrong?*
- *Lesson learned from the event*
- *Plans for a follow-up for the event*
- *Final financial report of the entire project*
- *Published material, photos and films of the event*
- *Your advice. If you could give one piece of advice to someone who wants to organise a similar event, what would it be? (Movies that Matter is collecting suggestions with the aim of publishing them online, to assist future festival organisers.)*
- *Feedback on the collaboration with Movies that Matter, and suggestions to improve our work.*

How will your budget change over time?

With each additional year of the festival, there will be constant pressure on certain budget items that you will most likely have to spend more money on:

- Staff (in order to keep good people you will have to pay them)
- Screening rights
- International guests
- Technical quality of screenings and sound

Main Tips

- Connect with other human rights film festivals
- Look for the best donors according to your profile
- Diversify your sources
- Invest in donor relationships
- Be creative with your budget; look for in-kind donations
- Stay independent
- Be transparent
- If possible, invest in local support

Example of a Budget

This example budget is used by Movies that Matter's International Programme. It is very simple and easy to adapt to each festival's needs. Please note, that not all budget items might be applicable to your festival. A festival will usually have an internal budget, which tends to be extremely detail-oriented and includes annotations intended for the team, and a budget for partners and donors detailing spending by category. Budgets are usually presented twice: the first time during the application process, and the second time accompanying the Final Report and the Financial Report.

BUDGET (COSTS IN €)					
	<i>budget item</i>	amount	costs per amount	costs	total costs
Programme					
	Screening fees & transport films			0	
	Translation & subtitling films			0	
	Debates, Q&A's, discussions			0	
	Travel and stay festival guests			0	
	Special events (opening, exhibition, concert, etc.)			0	
	<i>Total programme</i>				0
Production					
	Rent for venues			0	
	Technical equipment			0	
	Catering			0	
	<i>Total production</i>				0
PR/ Communication					
	Posters			0	
	Festival programme, catalogue			0	
	Website			0	
	Advertisement (radio, TV, print media)			0	
	<i>Total PR/ Communication</i>				0
Staff					
	Staff			0	
	<i>Total staff</i>				0
Administrative costs					
	Office rent			0	
	Communication			0	
	<i>Total administrative costs</i>				0
TOTAL COSTS [should be the same amount as total benefits]					0

BENEFITS IN €				
		status	benefits	total benefits
Grants & Sponsors				
	[name grant/ sponsor]	[confirmed, pending]	0	
	[name grant/ sponsor]	[confirmed, pending]	0	
	<i>Total grants & sponsors</i>			0
Additional income				
	Crowdfunding & private donations		0	
	Merchandising		0	
	Other income		0	
	Ticket sales		0	
	<i>Total additional income</i>			0
TOTAL BENEFITS [should be the same amount as total costs]				0



Live Radio at Movies that Matter Festival 2015. Good cooperation with media can bring new audiences and save festival resources. Photo: Archive of Movies that Matter.