

NEW VOICES FELLOWS CALL TO ACTON

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Funding Best Practices: Guidelines for the Future

We, the undersigned, being individuals, communities and representatives of institutions drawn from the global health, human rights and women's rights sectors;

Informed by our past experiences, current struggles and desire for better relationships with the global funding community;

Keen to campaign for progressive partnerships based on equality, respect and mutual trust amongst funders and grantees;

Committed to transparency, mutual accountability and honest feedback as equal partners;

Recognizing the inextricable link between sexual and reproductive health and rights, socio-economic and racial justice, and mental well-being;

Aware of the frustrations emanating from the COVID-19 pandemic that have forced reinventions, restructuring and redesigning of the funding space;

Do hereby welcome funders, partners and allies interested in giving life to sexual and reproductive justice and rights to:

- Commit to working towards a progressive and transformative funding platform
- Foster collaboration between funded grantees rather than competition. Where funders' resources are scarce, connect grantees with other funders to support projects.
- Ensure the people on your leadership, grantmaking and program support team reflect the communities and groups with which you seek partnership
- Prioritize funding initiatives driven by the narratives, experiences and knowledge of affected communities. Align funders' strategic plans and work to the local partners', not vice-versa. Do not force grantees to align their work to funding objectives
- Remove tiresome barriers and bureaucratic loops and hoops in fund application processes. Remain attentive to local laws and regulations where groups work and be open to fund in ways that are adaptable to them

To accomplish these goals, we encourage funders to:

- Remain open and flexible in funding approaches allowing groups quick turn around and interventions that are timely. Fund long term and core costs, allowing for systemic and behavioral change that needs time
- Recognise the impact of colonisation and white supremacy culture on the current state of sexual and reproductive justice and rights globally
- Recognise the inherent power imbalance in the relationship between philanthropy/funders/international nongovernmental organizations and Civil Society Organizations
- Have appetite for risk and creativity: Fund new, radical and out of the box ideas that would ordinarily be considered risky and removed from established models and approaches
- Allow room and secure resources for growth, learning and course correction
- Commit funds to help protect the socioeconomic, physical and mental well-being of front-line advocates championing sexual and gender equality and LGBTQ rights in the face of grave threats to their economic, physical and mental safety including deprivations, discrimination, prosecution, and violence
- Create spaces to actively and frequently listen from the groups funded