


# SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE MOBILIZATION FOR ISP-LED NETWORKS

ISP-led networks are facing a reduction in funding available for their work and for the populations they serve from traditional sources. Moreover, poor economies and growing authoritarianism are increasing the vulnerability and needs of ISP communities. ISP led networks are beginning to take on innovative approaches to use available financial resources more efficiently and to raise funding from new sources and in new ways. ISPs have shared knowledge, tools and experience and to build partnerships to respond to this new challenging funding context and welcome further opportunities for such exchange.

## Key Challenges



**Economic downturn** globally and in countries is leading to: fewer funds available for social and health programming; and increasing need as economic hardship stimulates vulnerability.

**Donor priorities are often not in line with the priorities of ISP communities** on the ground.

Traditional funding models for health rights advocacy use **reactive strategies**, with funding tied to specific projects and service provision programs that have a narrow set of deliverables and timeframe.

The well-funded, **anti-rights movement and growing authoritarianism** leads to: increased vulnerability and needs of ISP communities; reduced allocation of funds for social programming by governments; shrinking spaces for democratic evidence- and rights- based decision-making about funding.

Perceived improvements in the fields of HIV and TB in a context of other emergent crises is leading to their **de-prioritization of HIV and TB** and subsequent reductions in allocation of funding.

Some ISP networks are **overly dependent on specific donors**.

ISP-led networks are facing a storm of shrinking funding landscapes; rising, well-organized, well-funded anti-rights movements; shrinking spaces for democratic discourse; and emergencies like war, epidemics and impacts of climate change. In this context, ISP communities are increasingly vulnerable and experience more and more acute needs while, simultaneously, organizations that represent and serve them have fewer financial resources to respond to new needs.



## Successful Strategies

ISP networks analyzed their funding situation and opportunities and **developed fundraising strategies and grew fundraising capacities**, often enabled to do so with RCF support for core funding.

ISP networks **diversified sources of funding** through: using social media in new ways; crowdfunding; supporting social enterprise; building and leveraging partnerships.

ISP groups **leveraged synergies with other programming**, for example accessing technical assistance from the GF secretariat, or linking with ongoing work around Universal Health Coverage.

ISP groups developed **new and more cooperative partnerships** which enabled: the creation of **efficiencies**, for example, by cooperating with partners to merge activities; mutual support for each others' sustainability through **co-operation on fundraising** strategizing and activities.

Some ISP groups began to **budget for reserves**, allocating funds for mitigation of emergency situations.

ISP-led networks engaged in dialogue with decision makers to influence donors, governments, and to allocate funding of their priorities. They used information they gathered themselves for **evidence-based advocacy**. And they worked to improve donor alignment through strategic dialogue.

Since the funding landscape is changing, ISP networks must take new approaches to ensuring their sustainability. They must allocate time and resources to develop long term strategies for their sustainability and assess and address needs for new knowledge and skills. Having core funding (as provided by RCF) helps them to do this. Networks have begun to diversify sources of funding. Some ISP networks have included approaches to 'decolonize' funding so that communities have more influence on donor priorities by gathering and communicating evidence for advocacy and engaging in strategic dialogue with donors. Some ISP networks are finding it advantageous to cooperate with rather than compete with other organizations to find efficiencies and share resources. Many ISP networks have improved their sustainability by exploring their intersectionality and leveraging it to broaden the scope of their partnership and actions.

## Common Pitfalls

**Inadequate information sharing between donors and communities.**

As described by the THRIVE consortium, "There is a tendency for information to flow between donors and the human rights organizations they fund in a limited manner via grant reports, and there are limited opportunities for us to learn from each other." A root cause is the somewhat colonial nature of donor financing. A solution is proactive community-led dialogue with donors.

**Sustainability challenges in transitioning from being a hosted to independent organization.**

Several networks reported facing such challenges with root causes linked to challenges inherent in the process of young networks growing towards independence and to needs for more technical support of both host and recipient. Approaches to countering them often involved Phased transition approaches for organizational independence.

## Quick Assessment Questions

*These questions can be used to identify gaps in your approach to fundraising*

Do we have a fundraising strategy?

Do we have a timeline of funding opportunities with a schedule of actions we need to take to respond to these opportunities?

Do we have a strategy for maintaining our core funding? If we do we add it when possible to all of our other funding requests (ie beyond RCF)?

Is our funding coming from a diverse array of donors or are we heavily dependent on one or few donors for key activities and/or core funding?

REFLECT  
ON...

Have we explored our intersectionality with other groups working on social justice and discussed partnering with them?

Have we studied and tried innovative approaches to fundraising like social enterprising and investing in profit generating activities?

Do we communicate ISP community needs with donors (in order to influence donor priorities)?

Do we have a reserve fund (for use in case of emergencies)?

## Significant Story: CIRW 2024

The THRIVE Consortium, led by Global Action for Trans Equality (GATE) engaged with donors to increase funding for community-led responses to anti-rights attacks. Through a pre-conference ahead of the Unite! Advocate! Thrive! Global Trans Conference in July 2024, they provided a platform where donors could align their goals and collaborate with other donors to share insights, strategies, and experiences, thereby fostering a more cohesive and unified approach to funding. They addressed decolonizing donors stating:

*“Moving forward, this requires a fundamental shift in how donors perceive their role, not as controllers of resources but as facilitators who empower communities to determine their own priorities.”*



## Resources & Further Readings

This material specifically addresses diversification of funding sources, giving an overview of 10 different types of funding models including social enterprise, crowdfunding etc.

EpiC. Durham (NC): FHI 360. [\*Financing the Future: A Primer on Sustainable Funding Models for Civil Society Organizations Supporting the HIV Response\*](#).

This is a collection of articles on how charities are beginning to attract donations through cryptocurrencies.

Blum, Debra E. [\*“Cryptocurrency and Nonprofits”\*](#) in The Chronicle of Philanthropy.

This resource, while targeting people who use drugs specifically, will be relevant to other ISPs who intend to influence their country's Global Fund funding requests.

INPUD. 2022. [\*The Global Fund Grant Cycle 7, How people who use drugs can influence funding requests\*](#).

This guide looks not only at how funds can be raised for NGOs but also at how to address poverty among LGBTI individuals.

COC Netherlands. 2020. *Best Practices Guide on Economic Empowerment for LGBTI groups*. [\[ENG\]](#) [\[FR\]](#)

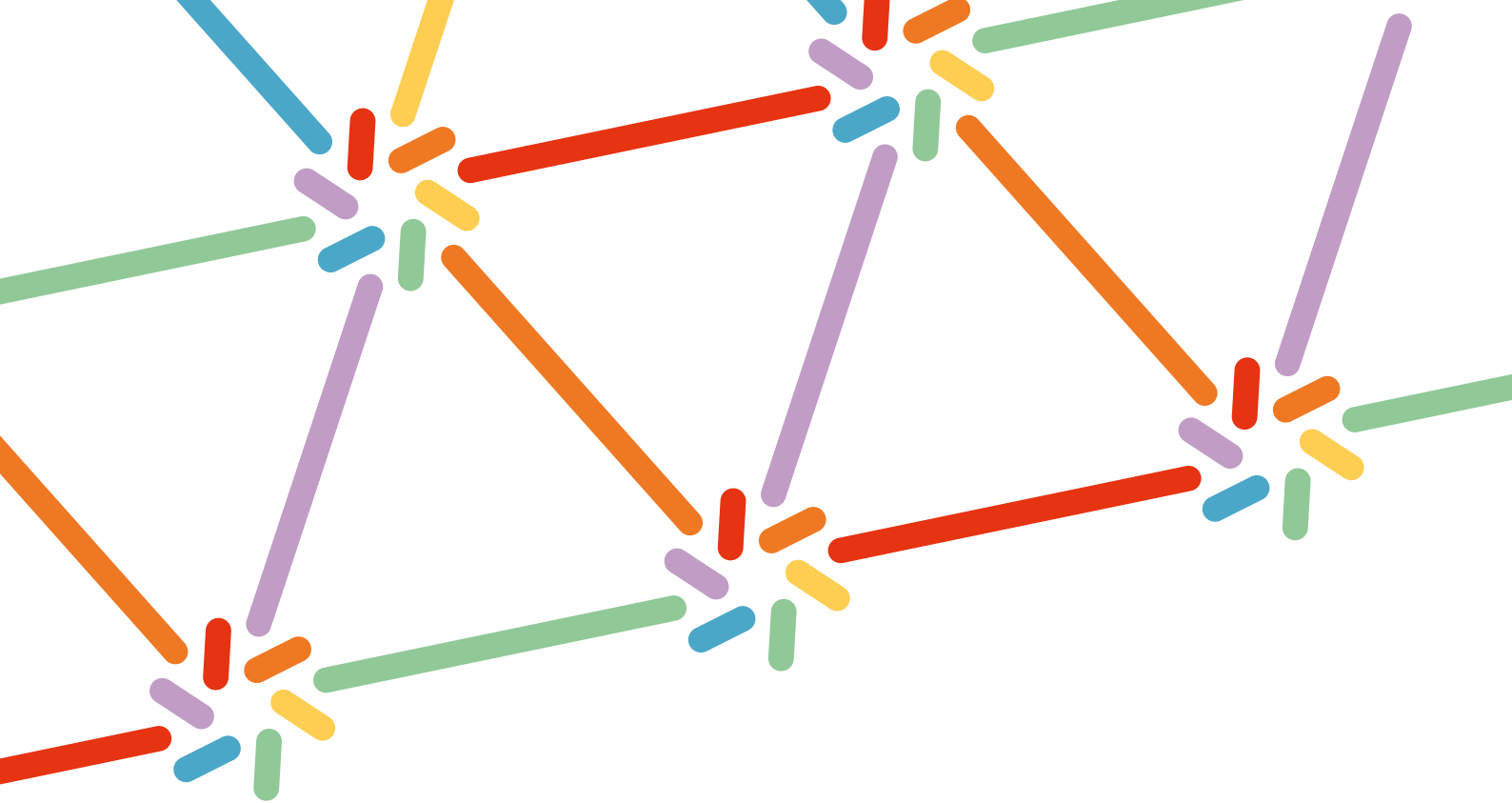
## Relevant RCF Outcome Areas

### Outcome Area 1: Network Strength and Influence

CIRW takeaways from the 2024 CIRW in this area shows how ISP networks are building their organizational strength through strategic fundraising and partnership development. With RCF's core funding support, networks have been able to develop fundraising strategies, grow their capacities, and move toward organizational independence. RCF partner networks are transitioning from hosted to independent organizations. Networks are also increasing their influence by gathering evidence for advocacy and engaging in strategic dialogue with donors to shape funding priorities.

### Outcome Area 4: Resource Accountability / Funding Environment

Key takeaways from the 2024 CIRW around this topic demonstrate how ISP networks are pushing for more accountable and equitable funding relationships by challenging colonial funding models and advocating for donors to act as facilitators rather than controllers of resources. The consortium created platforms for donor alignment and collaboration, working to ensure funding better reflects community priorities. This represents a shift toward greater resource accountability and a more responsive funding environment for ISP-led networks.



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