

# INTERNATIONAL GRANT MAKING

What's it like to make grants half-way around the world? Is international grant making right for you and your foundation?

## IN THIS GUIDE

Experienced international grant makers talk about how they've brought a global perspective to their funding. Read about the legal and logistical challenges they've faced, how they've built strong relationships with grantees, and the ins and outs of different options for international funding — from making grants directly to organizations in other countries, to working through intermediaries or in partnership with local funders, to applying a global lens in domestic work.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Dealing with distance and cultural differences
- Working with intermediaries
- U.S. guidelines for international funding



"You have to realize you're a guest in a foreign country, even as a grant maker. Every country has its own values, traditions, and needs."

—Grant maker on paying attention to the local context

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# A sample from the guide:

## STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH DIFFERENCE

**Do background work and consult widely.** Preliminary research, thought, and listening can help you avoid acting on assumptions and stereotypes.

- Find out what other funders are supporting, including funders based in the country or region you're interested in.
- Hear from a range of voices, including practitioners, academics, business-people, and public-sector officials.
- Involve potential stakeholders early on to help clarify varying points of view.
- Avoid relying exclusively on grantee "stars." A seasoned grant maker from a small family foundation approaches an unfamiliar setting by asking everyone he talks with, "*Who else should I talk to?*" And, "*Refer me to someone with a different point of view or opinion.*"
- Take some time to digest the guidance you get.

**Establish lines of communication.** Once you have done your background work and are ready to enter into grant relationships, establish clear and respectful lines of communication with grantees. This is particularly important in negotiating grant terms in places where people may have different ideas about what needs to be done, or who may have trouble articulating them in ways that U.S. grant makers are used to.

- Clarify your own expectations for contact and reporting. Do you want to hear from grantees every month? Twice a year? Annually? Would you prefer to talk on the phone? Communicate by e-mail?
- Familiarize yourself with the communications culture in which you are working.
- Draw on guidance from local colleagues or consultants.
- Decide how to handle language differences. In what language will you communicate with grantees, potential grantees, and the wider public? Will you hire translators, or can translation be handled by your staff?

**Together with grantees, establish clear benchmarks of success.** Try to be clear from the start about how a grant will be evaluated for success.

**Take advantage of diversity at home.** In the United States, culturally diverse and multilingual staff can bring skills and global knowledge to your grant making.