

HARBINGER FOUNDATION

International Granting

September 2010

WHO WE ARE

- Harbinger Foundation, established in 1995, is a small family foundation based in Toronto
- We believe in the following:
 - in the efficiencies of collaboration (when appropriate)
 - in the power of communication and networks
 - being curious and pushing ourselves to look for creative solutions
 - being respectful and transparent
 - listening
 - learning
 - respecting indigenous knowledge
 - enjoying our work
 - a passionate and creative world
- We are committed to international issues and sharing of information

HOW WE SELECT OUR GRANTEES

2001-2004: Personal connections in Colombia, Guatemala and with Canadian Network for International Surgery (CNIS)

In 2005 two things changed our approach to international granting:

- a CRA audit
- a desire from the Board to focus our granting on one issue

- 2005 we began using an annual juried, competitive **Requests for Proposals**
- Very occasionally, we respond to an unsolicited proposal

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FIRST WE NEEDED TO NARROW THE FOCUS

In 2005 we committed to the Global Water Crisis as our primary granting program

Where to begin?

1. We made a 6 month commitment to learning all we could about the sector
 2. We sought out experts
 3. We looked to see what information already existed
 4. Began granting with purpose of learning and expanding our network
 5. We made an effort to learn from our mistakes.
- After 6 months we had a very good understanding of the global, political and financial issues in the sector, had met most key people

LEARNING IN THE CANADIAN CONTEXT

Because of an open-ended audit, we still needed to find Canadian registered charities to fund

We researched and wrote our own landscape report of who was doing what in Canada (what technology, what countries, budgets)

HOW TO FIND CANADIAN GRANTEES

- Our goal was to have maximum impact with limited funds
- Did not want to fund well digging projects, too expensive and too many issues with sustainability
- Saw a need for **capacity building** for Canadian NGOs working in international water and sanitation
- Saw opportunity to leverage our \$ in CIDA (**policy and advocacy** approach)

SUMMARY

Agency Agreements:

Positive: very efficient use of funds; engaging and rewarding; more administrative work on both sides; potential to learn from own participation and from grantees

Negative: potential language issues; an element of risk that can affect your status with CRA; can create emotional and financial dependencies

Note: the activities that you are funding still need to be “charitable” according to CRA definition. I.e) funding the creation of a website might not be acceptable

Canadian-International NGOs

Positive: the Canadian NGO bears the risk of their local partners; less work; less financial pressure because you are not the sole funder; can be part of a larger project or master plan

Negative: much more expensive; lack of engagement with end recipient of funds and process; less of an opportunity to learn

CHALLENGES

- Donor (Board) fatigue with long-term, slow moving projects
- Measuring impact
- CRA Audit #1
- CRA Audit #2

OTHER OPTIONS

- A Canadian branch of an International Organization like Ashoka Canada.
- **Tides Canada:** cross border and international granting services. It is slow and expensive (5% management fee) but easy and acceptable to CRA
- www.tidescanada.org
- **Microfinance:** ieKiva
- www.kiva.org

INTERNATIONAL GRANTING AFFINITY GROUP?

- Is there interest in creating an affinity group along the lines of “Grantmakers Without Borders” or the Canadian Environmental Grantmakers Group?
- <http://www.gwob.net/>
- <http://www.cegn.org>