



YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Q: What are the pros and cons of coalition applications?

A from Kate: There is a huge array of pros for working in coalition, from sharing knowledge and resources (reducing duplication/waste) to amplifying your voices for lobbying or campaigning, see the presentation slides for a longer list – and all this can be conveyed in funding applications. I think it also asserts a level of collegiate spirit, a generosity in putting the ‘cause’ first, front and centre, rather than promoting your ‘brand’. The cons would be that you are connecting your organisation to others, so you need to ensure you are all ‘on the same page’ in terms of your missions aligning – or aligning on a specific area of work, and being diligent in your in-house discussions and assessments to ensure you are a good fit to work in partnership, and have capacity to work within a coalition. It is highly advisable that you clarify how you will work within the coalition, who will be responsible for what – bid writing, evaluating, reporting, in terms of fundraising, and write up a note confirming this. It is absolutely essential that you draw up a budget – before submitting any applications – that lays out how any funds received will be allocated, and this is agreed in writing by all partners.

A from SCN: Our work at The Social Change Nest enables us to leverage learnings and open spaces for discussion across both the community organising and funding space. Funders are finally catching up to the fact that many changemakers have stepped away from the “traditional” or more top down ways of working, functioning in systems that weren’t designed for them to prosper, and are instead exploring more collaborative approaches that are grounded in movement building, exploratory governance and flatter hierarchical structures. Coalition funding can assist in this more collaborative way of working and also facilitates work that takes a more intersectional approach, therefore driving greater and wider-reaching impact.

As Kate stated, when bringing on more organisations, things can move slower and every now and again fall through the cracks, so it's good to have a strong project plan and an accountability mechanism in place. This could be something rooted in solidarity, such as an accountability buddy from one of the partner organisations, or something more process driven such as incorporating free project management tools into your everyday way of working.

It's crucial to have a clear understanding of the value add of the partnership and coalition. There is a lot of what we like to call beautiful messiness that comes with working in this space, and every now and again miscommunications can happen, especially when working with organisations or individuals outside of our everyday. Understandably, we all bring our own lived experience to work, and it's therefore good to have at least a basic understanding of what a trauma-informed approach involves so that you can work effectively and in a people-centred way when entering into partnerships and coalitions.

Q: What makes the difference between a coherent group application and one that lacks focus?

A from Kate: Personally, I think a key difference is if it is clearly logical for the groups to be working together, and by doing so, there is an exponential benefit – and this is well explained, versus it appearing illogical and even a bad use of capacity/resources. In practical terms, make it easy for the reader of your application to understand your collective ambition: don't cut & paste existing texts if the partner organisations are usually talking to vastly different audiences such as contemporary art and elderly care, work on the language to deliver a shared voice, and be aware for jargon specific to only one sector.

Q: We need to raise max £2k by July. Is that possible doing standard funding applications?

A from Kate: If I was trying to raise £2k in that timeframe, I would not be looking at grant applications as the turnaround is too tight, unless there are any funds you are already aware of which make unusually quick decisions. I would prepare a clear narrative of why there is this urgent need, and look to anyone who has ever supported your organisation and make an urgent appeal to them, including a crowdfunder if it feels right for your audience. Alternatively, £2k is 10 of you raising £200 each, through asking family, friends, selling cakes (clichéd but effective for small targets), supper clubs, pub quizzes, sponsored walk/challenge, it is doable.

Q: Colombia is on the list of countries you fund? What are the project like-to-fund types?

A from SCN: We don't currently operate any funds/grant pools, although we have in the past. We distribute grants internationally for our partners, and they each have their own eligibility criteria and areas they concentrate on funding. You can look into the [Urban Movement and Innovation Fund](#) as an example of one of the partners we work with to distribute grants.

Q: We're an unincorporated group (we do have safeguarding policy, constitution etc) - basically a group of people who decided to keep a monthly event/group going. I find we tend to not be eligible for a lot of funding out there - it feels like this way of working could mean that we then can still access the funding, but I'm assuming through a partner being a budget holder?

A from K: Yes, that is how I've known smaller organisations to work around not being eligible, by partnering with a registered charity on projects that are mutually beneficial, i.e. the registered charity is keen to diversify their audiences. Just make sure you have everything in writing and both organisations have sign-off on the budget submitted to the funder, so there is clarity and good communication and no surprises.

A from SCN: We often share funding that is available to small unincorporated grassroots organisations in our newsletter, or grants from funders that accept a fiscal host. You can subscribe here if you haven't already: [Subscribe to our newsletter](#). We also share grant opportunities on our [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#) accounts.

Our [Grant Management](#) service allows us to sign grant agreements as a registered CIC on your behalf, enabling unincorporated groups to access different kinds of funding. If you'd like any help or information, please contact Rufaro@thesocialchangenest.org or [book in a call](#).

Q: It seems my borough is keen to give me a small pot of money to run a pilot for kids experiencing adversity. Concerns are given that it's a pilot, it's very hard to predict outcomes and also the number of beneficiaries. How do we navigate?

A from K: I'd advise being realistic in your projected beneficiary numbers and flagging up that if you were to roll out the project after that you would hope to increase attendance by XX% over the following year. Note that for the pilot you are aiming to provide a really quality service/project with tailored in-depth support to learn as much as possible, rather than aiming for quantity - assuming your concern is that you might not have many attendees? Outcomes put clear measures i.e. of the

beneficiaries we aim for XX% to report an improvement in social confidence, you could also note that you are prepared to listen to the needs of the group and provide support as needed thus aware additional unexpected outcomes may arise i.e. referrals to foodbanks or other signposting, and will report back on this too.