Funding demystified

A WORKSHOP FOR
APPLICATION WRITING

Fonds

Breaking the Ice exercise

—What media and materials do you use in your work and why?

—What are the themes that you express in your artistic work?

—What is the meaning of your artistic work in your context?

—What are the key moments of your artistic story that have led you to this moment?

—What has been your experience applying for funding up until now?

Block 1:
Mapping the Local

1.1 Who are the funders?

Public	Fill in before or during workshop session
Private	
Corporate	
International	
Useful platforms	

1.2 What do they do?

Name	Scope	Eligibility criteria	Individuals or organisations	Form of support
Fill in before or during workshop session				

1.3 What are they like?

Name	Procedures	Language	Working style
Fill in before or during workshop session			

1.4 Additional useful information

- Gather points of additional information on navigating bureaucracy here, before or during workshop session

Block 2:
Results Frameworks

Block 2 covers:

—Describing a plan using activities, outputs, outcomes and impact

—Explanation of why this structure is useful

—Examples to create a deeper understanding

—Thinking about your assumptions

—Adapting your results framework to meet the focus of an opportunity

—Indicators and sources of information

2.1 Introducing the Framework

— Application forms require a particular way of thinking about a project plan

— Results framework helps figure out what information to include

— Create the building blocks of the story you will tell

— Even if the application form doesn't use these terms, this exercise is good preparation for filling it in

2.1 Introducing the Framework

	Summary	Assumption	Indicators	Source
Activity				
Output				
Outcome				
Impact				

2.2 Four levels

	Summary
Activity	What will you be doing?
Output	What will you have when you've done it?
Outcome	What do you expect to happen once you've done it?
Impact	What is all of this for?

2.2 Four levels: Activities

— The **activities** of your project are what you will literally be doing if you get the funding

— Very practical answer to the most basic question: "What do you want to do as part of this project?"

— Not every detail, but the broad tasks and steps for each stage of the project

2.2 Four levels: Outputs

—The **outputs** of your project are what you will put out into the world

—This will be the final product of the funding, whether that is an artwork, a performance, an exhibition etc

—Might be harder to define for experimental work

—Important to describe as much as possible to give the person reading a tangible mental picture of the project

2.2 Four levels: Outcomes

—The **outcomes** you expect to see from your project the (good) things that will result from your outputs being produced

—They are a description of the direct results of your outputs in the short to medium term

—The effect you want to have on immediate audiences and environments

2.2 Four levels: Impact

— The **impact** you want your project to have is a longer-term change that you want to see in society

— It is the solution to whatever problem is motivating you

— The impact is not something you will achieve on your own, it is a bigger change that you hope to be part of

— Defining an impact helps the person reading to understand why your project is important

2.3 Progressions

Earlier   TIME   Later

→

Concrete   SPECIFICITY   Abstract

→

More control   CONTROL   Less control

→

2.4 Abstraction

— A project described this way is an abstraction

— Artistic work doesn't divide into tidy boxes like this, real life is always messier

— There can be multiple ways to describe the same project

— Can use this to your advantage while writing an application

2.5 Two examples

|	
Activity	Fundraising workshop for artists without (much) experience applying for Grants
Output	Around 50 artists have participated in the fundraising workshop and have a stronger understanding of how to apply for a grant to support an artistic project
Outcome	Artists who participated are more likely to apply for and receive grants for their artistic projects
Impact	There is more accessibility to resources for artists, and resources are distributed more fairly

2.5 Two examples

Activity	Exhibition of work by young artists relating to the environment. During the exhibition there will be a series of workshops bringing together different local voices to tell their stories about the effects of climate change
Output	At least 100 people of different ages from the local area have participated in workshops and talks, and at least 10 participating artists have shown their work
Outcome	Nuanced and locally rooted discussions about the impact of climate change on the lives of people in the area. People feel empowered to speak up and demand more sustainable policies
Impact	Local citizens have a stronger voice in fighting climate change, more sustainable policies implemented

2.6 Assumptions
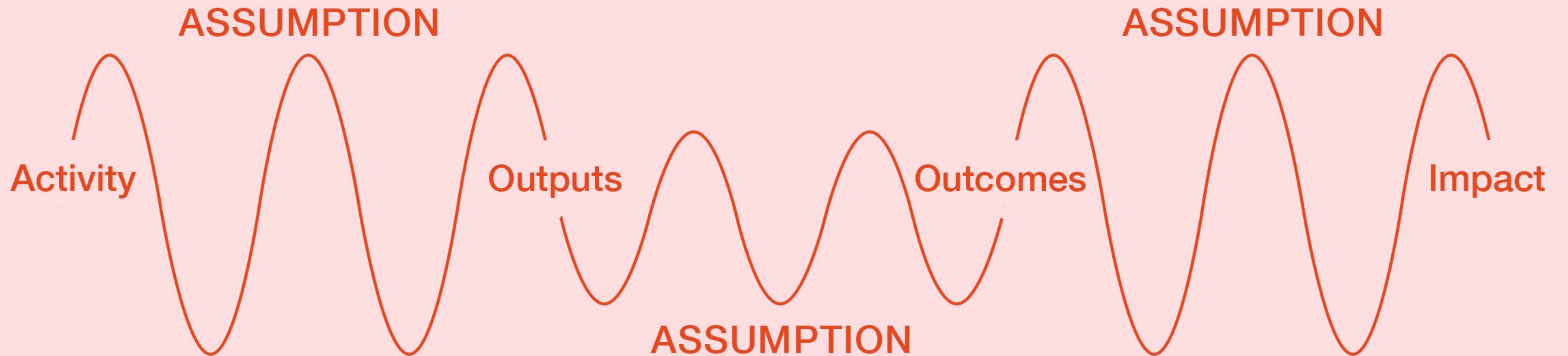
The jumps between levels need to be realistic – think about what you assume

2.6 Assumptions

	Summary	Assumptions
Activity	Fundraising workshop for artists without much experience applying for grants	Planned time and location of workshop are convenient for target group to attend Workshop content is aligned with needs of participating artists
Output	Around 50 artists have participated in the fundraising workshop and have a stronger understanding of how to apply for a grant to support an artistic project	Participants are able to put the skills into practice following the workshop
Outcome	Participants are more likely to apply for and receive grants for their artistic projects	Lack of technical application-writing skills is a major factor in the lack of equal access to grants
Impact	Improved access to grants for artists without much prior experience	

2.6 Assumptions

	Summary	Assumptions
Activity	Exhibition of work by young artists relating to the environment. During the exhibition there will be a series of workshops bringing together different local voices to tell their stories about the effects of climate change	A wide section of local public are interested in sharing their stories regarding local impact of climate change enough to attend
Output	At least 100 people of different ages from the local area have participated in workshops and talks, and at least 10 participating artists have shown their work locally	Bringing together different stories and voices allows people to deepen and strengthen their commitment to climate justice
Outcome	Nuanced and locally rooted discussions about the impact of climate change on the lives of people in the area. People feel empowered to speak up and demand more sustainable policies	There is space in the local political landscape for empowered voices to make a difference
Impact	Local citizens have a stronger voice in fighting climate change, more sustainable policies implemented	

2.7 Being Strategic

What you write can be tailored to match the focus of the funding opportunity… up to a point

	Original idea	Focus on "Capacity Building"	Pushing it too far
Outcome	Participants are more likely to apply for and receive grants for their artistic projects	Participating artists have a better capacity for planning and implementation of stronger projects.	Participating artists will feel less anxiety about money, and so will have better mental health

2.8 Indicators & sources

—Indicators are **what** you observe to see how you did

—Sources are the ways you make the observation

	Summary	Indicators	Source
Output	Around 50 artists have participated in the fundraising workshop and have a stronger understanding of how to apply for a grant to support an artistic project	% of participants report a clearer understanding of how to apply for a grant	Compare surveys before and after the workshop
Outcome	Artists who participated are more likely to apply for and receive grants for their artistic projects	% of participants successfully applying for grants in the year after the workshop	Survey one year after the workshop

Practice exercise: Results Frameworks

Get into teams of 4 or 5 people. Take turns explaining a project idea to your group, then pick one idea.

Write down *in one sentence*: at least one activity, output and outcome, and the impact these contribute to. Be as concrete as possible.

If you have time, try to identify some assumptions you are making that would have to be true for the output to lead to the outcome.

Block 3: Writing

Block 3 covers:

— The application form as a text

— Clarity as the key need for a strong application

— Acknowledging and using the arbitrariness in this approach

— Adapting language to different funders

3.1 Thinking about application forms

— Application forms vary in how strict or open they are

— May tell you something about what the funder will be like to work with

— A clear structure makes it easier for the person reading to absorb a lot of information

— Read carefully and answer the questions that are there

3.2 Clarity

— The biggest issue we have seen in applications from otherwise strong applicants is lack of clarity

— Many talented but inexperienced artists are rejected because their application doesn't show their project clearly

— Especially artists with a long-term idea or an experimental approach can find this difficult

3.3 Information

An application can be unclear because it:

1. Doesn't have enough information

2. Has too much information (making it hard to pick out the key points)

3. Has the right amount of information, but in the wrong order

4. A combination of the above

3.4 Telling the story

— People often write proposals that mirror their thinking process, telling the story of how they got to the point of making an application

— This kind of application talks more about context and the why, to communicate how the person writing sees the project

— This comes at the expense of concrete details (who, what, where, when…)

3.5 What not to do

Question: Short description of the project for which funding is sought (max. 100 words)

This is a long-term project rooted deeply in the interest in literature as a platform for social emancipation towards solidarity with all forms of life.

Since 2017, this project has been evolving around our attempt to document an ecosystem of alternative literature productive in our city and others. The story about the marginalisation of non-hegemonic writers reflects a shift in paradigm, and the initiatives and time taken recently by young people organizing around independent publishing.

The goal is to emphasise the need for solidarity in today's individualistic societies. For this next phase of the ongoing project, a production of a publication is envisioned based on the voices and stories we gather from the community. The text will bring together all the separate steps taken so far in this developing story in a coherent form, thus the message of solidarity might reach a wider audience and achieve a stronger impact.

3.6 Doing it better

Question: Short description of the project for which funding is sought (max. 100 words)

The project will consist of an ethnographic field trip, during which we will interview individuals, collectives, and spaces active in independent publishing activities in four key cities in Mexico.

Based on these interviews, which will build on around five years of prior research, we will produce a book bringing together the politics and tactics of independent publishing and the radical ideas associated with it. With it, we will reach a generation of young readers who have not been exposed to publishing outside the mainstream, provoking anti-hegemonic modes of thought and a more diverse public sphere in the country.

3.7 Making it work for you

— In the early stages, being so definite can feel arbitrary

— The abstraction of the results framework can help you identify concrete information to share

— Let the arbitrariness work for you by aligning your outcomes and impact with their mission

— When you don't know yet what something will become, think about how you will find out

3.8 Adapting the language to the type of funder

— Information and language you use can also be adapted depending on the type of funder

— Big or small, local or international, focussed or general

— Context, the significance of certain names or concepts a person needs to know to understand your project

— How much is the person reading likely to know already, and how much do you need to tell them?

Practice exercise: Writing

Get back into your teams and look back at your results framework.

Now answer in a way that includes all the information contained in your results framework: **Short description of the project for which funding is sought** (max. 100 words)

— Put your most important point at the beginning

— Use short sentences

— Avoid jargon

Block 4: Budgets

Block 4 covers:

—Preparing a basic project budget

—How budgets can reinforce the story you are telling

—Thinking about salaries

—How much detail a budget should contain

—Grouping costs into budget lines

—Managing deviations from a planned budget

4.1 What is a budget for?

— Your budget is a statement of everything you need that costs money

— Budgets are part of telling the story

— Reader should be able to guess your activities and outputs just from the budget

— A clear budget also shows you know what you're doing

4.2 What should it look like?

—Application form may include budget template to fill in

—Complexity of the budget depends on the project scale

—Larger, multi-year projects might need multiple sub-totals and detailed planning

—For a smaller project, budgets that are overcomplicated become hard to read

4.3 The size of your budget

—Funders will say the size of grants they want to give

—Since funding and staff hours are fixed in advance, asking for less won't increase your chances

—The total amount you are asking for should be reasonable for your activities

—If you roughly know your budget before you start looking for funds, you can pick the right opportunities

4.4 Starting your budget

— Think first about what *things* you will need that cost money. For example, equipment, travel, venue, labour

— Once you have a list, start trying to estimate what each item costs

— Estimate based on your experience, asking friends and colleagues, or looking things up online

— Try and be as realistic as you can

4.5 Paying People

— You will need to decide how you are going to pay everyone involved

— Determine a fair hourly rate for any specialists you want to hire, plus how many hours you'll need

— Figure out how to pay yourself and your collaborators

— Artists often underpay themselves to reduce total budget

— Know what your labour is worth – budget for salaries based your experience and needs

4.6 Budget lines

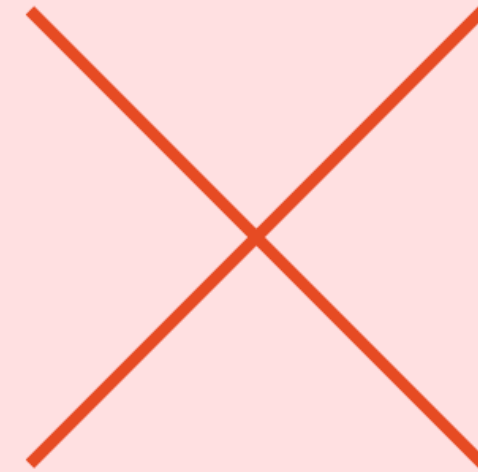|	
Camera	100
Microphone	100
Editing software	60
Projector	70
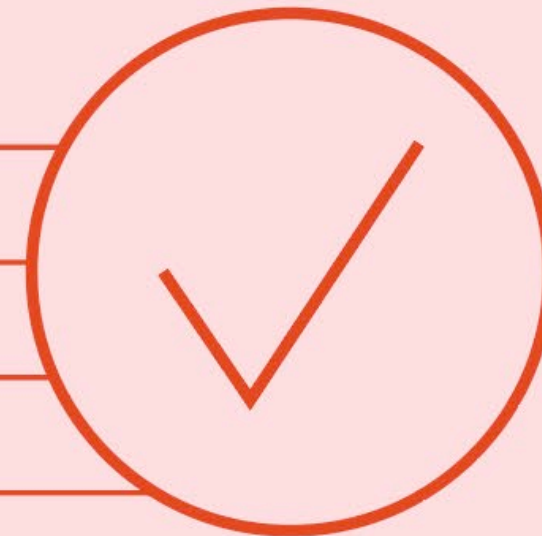
Technical equipment = 330

Individual items are grouped into budget lines. These make the budget easier to read and give you flexibility – it's easier to change the details within a budget line if you need to.

4.6 Budget lines

Camera	100	Paint	20	
Microphone	100	Costumes	80	Equipment
Editing software	60	Chair rentals	20	= 480
Projector	70	Batteries	30	

But budget lines that are too broad get in the way of communicating.

4.7 Funders' limits

— Some funders have restrictions on costs they will cover

— For organisations, most common type of restriction is on overhead

— Funders may also have restrictions on purchasing items that will be useful beyond the project

— Read regulations carefully and write your budget accordingly

4.8 Organising budget lines: two examples

	Budget items	Quantity	Cost per item	Covered through other sources	Amount requested
A	**Research phase**				**1050**
A1	Researcher salary	3	200		600
A2	Transport	1	150		150
A3	Accommodation	3	100		300
B	**Production phase**				**1100**
B1	Technical equipment	1	600		600
B2	Editing software	1	100		100
B3	Performer salary	4	100		400
C	**Exhibition**				**400**
C1	Venue hire	1	950	950	0
C2	Documentation	1	400		400
	contingency (5 %)				**130**
	Total amount				**2680**

4.8 Organising budget lines: two examples

	Budget items	Quantity	Cost per item	Covered through other sources	Amount requested
A	**Salaries**				**1000**
A1	Researcher salary	3	200		600
A2	Performer salary	4	100		400
B	**Equipment**				**700**
B1	Technical equipment	1	600		600
B2	Editing software	1	100		100
C	**Logistics**				**850**
C1	Venue hire	1	950	950	0
C2	Transport	1	150		150
C3	Accommodation	3	100		300
C4	Documentation	1	400		400
	contingency (5 %)				**130**
	Total amount				**2680**

4.9 Double checking

— There can be a lot of small details to check with budgets

— With international applications you might have to give the budget in multiple currencies

— Using formulas in a spreadsheet for your calculations helps, but tiny mistakes can have big consequences

— Ask someone else to do a final check

4.10 Using your budget

— Budget will probably be the template for a financial report after your project is done

— Keep track of your actual spending using the same budget lines

— Real spending will never align in every detail, but deviations should make sense

— Inform your funder of major changes

Practice exercise: Budgets

Get back into your teams and look back at the project you've planned together so far.

Make an exhaustive *list of everything that costs money* that you would need to make the project happen

Then try to put them into 3 or 4 groups, either by project phase or by type of cost

If you have time, try to estimate how much you would need to ask for each group of costs

Block 5: Reporting

Block 5 covers:

— The purpose of reporting

— Using reporting to reflect and learn yourself

— Gathering qualitative and quantitative information for your report

— Reflective reporting, particularly when projects have not gone as planned

5.1 What is reporting?

— Reporting takes place after the project

— May also be reporting during the project

— It is the official statement of what the *actual* activities, outputs, outcomes, impact were

— Final payment may depend on your report

5.2 Why do you report?

Why do Funders ask for reporting? A couple of reasons:

— They're interested

— For reporting to their own donors

— To learn and improve

5.3 Reporting forms

— You'll likely report by filling in a standardized form, which you'll receive in advance

— Allows funders to aggregate across multiple projects

— Range of approaches to reporting from different funders

— Will likely mirror application form

5.4 Results Framework in Reporting

— Good reporting helps you understand what you can learn from the project

— Like the application, being clear is crucial

— Results framework will help you identify the most important information to share

— Describe the success of actual activities, outputs, outcomes, impact

5.5 Planning for reporting

— Look at the reporting form and start planning early

— The indicators in your results framework are a guide to what you should observe and record

— Reporting form may ask for specific indicators as well, such as gender balance

5.6 Ways of Observing

You will need to decide what methods are best to observe based on what you want to observe. Some ways might be:

— Media Scan

— Web statistics

— Collecting feedback

— Self-reflection

— Surveys

— Interviews

5.6 Ways of Observing

— Make sure that the effort involved is proportional and makes sense for you

— Be aware of any duty of care and push back if you need to

— Be transparent with anyone whose personal data you are using

5.7 When do you measure?

—Plan the moments you will collect information

—If you hope to see tangible change in a certain indicator, measure before and after so you have a baseline

—If you're looking for more reflective feedback, wait a little

—If you want to see something long term, pick a moment that is doable

5.8 Writing

— A good report helps the person reading form a mental picture of the project

— Any pictures you can share will also help

— Just like the application, answer the questions that are there for ease of reading

— Don't assume detailed knowledge of your project – personnel might have changed!

5.9 Being reflective

— Great reports reflect on what was learned through the project

— Maybe one of the assumptions was wrong, or something unexpected derailed the project

— Being transparent makes a better impression than hiding

— Share *what* went wrong, *why*, and what you would do differently

5.10 Financial reporting

— Your financial report is based on the structure of your budget

— Actual spending will never be exactly the same as planned, life is just messy like that

— Check funder's policy on budget deviations and when you need their approval

Practice exercise: Reporting

Back in your teams, look at the project you've described so far. Imagine it's already done and you need to answer the following question:

Give a short summary of the results of your project – what did you achieve, what was the impact? (100 words)

Answer this question in two different ways:

1. Describing the *best-case* scenario version of your imagined project; what went well, and how do you know that it went well?

2. Describing the *worst-case* scenario version of your imagined project; what went badly, and why do you think it went badly? Is there something you could do differently next time?

Closing exercise

Prioritising being clear is also important when you talk to funders!

Introduce yourself again, making sure to touch on an activity, an output, an outcome and an impact

Weave the information together in a natural, conversational way.