

Ideas in Grant-making - A Suggested Policy

Background

The Pacific Foundation, a charitable giving not-for-profit, was founded in 2006 to support non-profit innovators nationally and internationally. Specifically, the Foundation aims to support program and organizations whose work utilizes new and innovative technology to address issues of social justice, environment, and new arts.

Vision Statement

Pacific Foundation envisions a more fair society that can leverage the power of new and innovative technology, ideas and global communication to identify and seek solutions to immutable problems facing the poor, vulnerable, and disenfranchised.

Mission Statement

The Pacific Foundation supports projects, locally and globally, that apply innovation to create a 'ripple effect' of change around issues of economic fairness, environmental protection, new and bold art, and collaborative engagement through grassroots communications.

Now entering its third year of operation, the Pacific Foundation has set out to establish core giving protocols, by which we foster innovation, engage in idea exchange, identify leverage points, and ultimately realize our vision of a more fair society.

Our grant-making policy is therefore based on research and learning from our own practice.

1: Basic policy criteria

1.1: Mission aligned

We will continue to give preference to funding groups and organizations of limited means working in our core program areas: arts and technology, environmental advocacy, and social justice.

1.2: Exclusions

Given that our resources cannot meet every need, we prefer not to fund the following:

- grants to individuals;
- general appeals;
- party political or evangelizing religious organizations (of any faith);

1.3: Riders

Our experience of grant-making in practice has led to the creation of a number of riders to these exclusions. In each case, the factor governing consideration will be that Pacific Foundation funding would make a demonstrable difference to the target community.

1.3.1: Leverage Points

While we mostly give to organizations that fall within our primary program areas, an exception will be made for groups/ projects that demonstrate significant innovation and use of a leverage point for maximum impact.

1.3.2: Trustee Discretionary Funds

Each Trustee is allotted \$10,000 in grant funds to go to an organization of their choice.

2: Grant-Making themes

Upon its founding, the Foundation's trustees identified a set of themes for grant-making,

based on individual trustee giving history, existing affiliated organizations and most importantly a principled desire to impact society positively, particularly in the areas of creative culture, sustainability, and social justice.

These themes have been used for two years as the basis for considering applications for funding, and, to an extent proved useful, with most grantees falling squarely under one or other program area. With a few exceptions, most grantees did not possess components of all three themes. It is ideal that potential grantees demonstrate an intersection among themes. The examples given simply illustrate the type of work the Pacific Foundation will consider under each program area:

2.1: Arts & Technology/ Creative Culture

Includes film, new media, new programming, and artwork that addresses current issues (e.g. sustainability, progressive agenda, etc.)

2.2: Sustainability/ Environmental Advocacy

Includes local and global efforts towards biodiversity, waste management, water conservation, and new technology for understanding and communicating innovative practices.

2.3: Social Justice

Includes new and technologically innovative efforts to address social and economic inequities through entrepreneurial support, including micro-financing, business development as well as project that build life and job skills.

3: Priorities within the themes

Having selected themes so as to maximize rather than restrict access to funding, we have to be able to prioritize rationally within them. The Foundation will support the following as priority areas.

3.1: innovative work of any kind, especially in fields where it is hard to attract support from mainstream funders;

3.1.2: projects that are replicable or demonstrate capacity to serve as models

3.1.3: projects that utilize new media/ technology to achieve goals

3.1.4: projects that can demonstrate a measurable impact on issue areas.

4: Style and approach

Some elements of the way the Pacific Foundation works are particularly important to us in shaping our role and function as a grant-making body.

4.1: Promotion of access to grants by all eligible groups. We will:

4.1.1: work collaboratively with foundations and other organizations to improve access to information, research and best practices around specific issues.

4.1.2: continue to develop the use of non-traditional channels to reach groups outside mainstream communication networks.