

How to Wean off Grant Dependency and Create Collective Pots

Collective pots of money are a fundamental part of community building and certainly not a new idea, but they can help us build something new. That is, understanding how shared resources, exchange and support can function within, yet contrary to, the capitalist market as it is now. It's important to remember that this has been and continues to be a core feature of communities across the globe and learning about this in person, beyond our module, is key.

1 Self-tax and create collective pots of money

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Creating shared pots of money can be a one-off event or a consistent practice, in which case it becomes a sort of self-tax. There are several ways to do this. You may want to source through crowdfunding efforts, community shares, or simple recurring payments to a democratically managed community fund, akin to Solidfund, My Cool Class, or the CultureBanked model. Focusing on creative work that is made, stored or represented digitally, 'CultureBanking' hopes to help artists retain IP and yet connect to the commons by banking communal digital rights, which then refund community activities. While there are many different options for joint funds, the value systems that uphold them must support sustainability.

Q How might collective pots and self-taxing complicate notions of ownership, stewardship, identity and care? What processes of decision making would you instil alongside these tools?

Resources

1. [Good Finance](#)
2. [Solid Fund](#)
3. [My Cool Class](#)
4. [Culture Banked](#)
5. A database of [tools](#) for collaborative funding from DarkMatter Labs.

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2 Work as a cooperative, not a charity

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There are many benefits to working as a charity, including certain tax breaks, but to truly create cohesion, reliability and mutual care requires a rejection of the paternalism and hierarchies inherent to charity work. While cooperatives are not the only responses to charities, the notion of democratic member control, solidarity and autonomy are key values that can be enacted across organisations working on equitable practices.

Q If you are currently operating as a charity, what resources and support would you need to set in place to transition to a different structure?

Resources

1. [The Cooperative College](#)
2. [Training for Co-op advisors](#)

2

David Graeber's anthropological work on the notion of value as the importance of actions, and Nancy Munn's work on creative action and the transformation of value are great places to start when considering what we mean by 'value' beyond money. For more practical applications we can tease out the ideas behind Gross National Happiness or think through other forms of 'value capture'. We've even provided the Cambridge Value Mapping tool below to play with these concepts. Working through their activity might help you articulate how your organisation or group has 'invested otherwise' and help prove or clarify the usefulness of thinking beyond capital as value.

Q

1. What kinds of value do you see within the everyday work of your team/community?
2. How can you keep track of other forms of value and their impact?

Resources

1. [David Graeber](#)
2. [The Fame of Gawa](#)
3. [Bhutan Wealth - Happiness Counts](#)
4. [The Cambridge Value Mapping Tool - Institute for Manufacturing \(IfM\)](#)

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3 Think through your value system, including and beyond monetary value

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It's easy to forget that funders themselves are also competing to get the 'best projects'. They also need to respond to questions of 'impact', creating tensions where there might otherwise be cooperation. One way to change this might be to have funders pool their financial resources together and create a large pot of money that could be used to find great projects and provide each funder with the benefits of the project's impact.

Q

1. How could you frame the benefits of a 'funder federation' to interested parties?
2. What sort of decision-making practices would need to be in place for this kind of federation?

Resources

1. [Solid Fund](#)
2. Check out resources for Funding and Partnership Agreements, as well as Grantmaking Practices [here](#)

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4 Create a federation of funders who would build a shared pot

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A DAO, or Decentralised Autonomous Organisation, is a decentralised and member owned organisation that employs smart contracts on a blockchain network. While there are conversations to be had about co-opting and technocrats, as well as how these technologies are subject to the same techno-optimism as those that have gone before them, there is space for those who want to use these tech tools to work against existing institutions. Still, it's important to not ignore the real, material impacts and complicated relationship to ownership and accountability.

Q

1. What might a DAO allow you to achieve that you wouldn't otherwise?
2. What are the merits and challenges?
3. How might you build feminist strategies into a DAO conception to redress techno-optimistic approaches?

Resources

1. [Feminist Strategies for P2P](#)
2. [Factory DAO](#)
3. [nfts](#)

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5 Consider the merits of creating a DAO

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This may seem a bit contradictory, but you don't have to start with a huge sum of money. Even having a small grant available builds your reputation as an organisation, and giving to significant and disruptive projects and people might even bring more money in from those who appreciate the work you're doing and want to see you fund more brilliant work. More importantly, you get to decide the terms of engagement and think radically about what grants should look like. You could try setting up a no questions asked scholarship like The Post-Growth Institute or look for projects that are long-term and disruptive. You can even repurpose that time you would have spent on grant writing for conversations about truly collaborative funding.

Q

1. How might you redefine the terms of engagement of grant-giving?
2. What are the limitations to change you've experienced through existing grant-making practices?

Resources

1. [Kendra IO](#)
2. No questions asked grant giving from [Post Growth](#). For an example see their [scholarship application](#)

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6 Create a non-monetary system of exchange

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Be a grant giver instead of seeking out grants

Another well-trialled practice that has many benefits is creating a system of exchange not based on money. Some do this as a time banking model, where expertise shared with one person earns you a token of sorts, that can then be used to employ someone else's expertise. Another example of this is the Offers and Needs Market, where goods, services, and care are distributed through a virtual or in person session. Though some of the more resilient initiatives in this space have petered out, it does not need a formal entity to enact and is based on fundamental human interactions.

Q

1. What might be learned to build upon, from the successes and demise of non-monetary initiatives?

Resources

1. [Trade School](#)
2. [Economy of Hours](#)
3. [Offers and Needs](#)

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