



rosa

**the uk fund for
women and girls**

Rosa's first 'Participatory Grantmaking' experience

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Rosa

Still the first and only-UK-wide Women's fund

Vision of gender equality and social justice for All women in the UK and a society in which they:

- Are safe and free from violence
- Achieve economic justice
- Enjoy good health and wellbeing
- Have an equal voice

Mobilising resources for women's equality by:

- **Championing** the women's sector and encouraging others to invest in it.
- **Connecting** individuals, organisations and sectors; developing collaborative solutions: developing leaders and leadership, building a movement for change.
- **Generating** revenue from corporates, industries and individuals; investing in grassroots women's organisations and national campaigns through grants, mentor-matching, training, networking.





WOMAN **TO** WOMAN

Grassroots grants supported by the Tampon Tax



VOICES FROM THE FRONTLINE



INSPIRE TOGETHER

Grants

Training

Mentor Matching

Networking & Connecting

Leadership Development



Justice and \equiv Equality \equiv Fund

MANAGED BY ROSA

Participatory Grantmaking – A natural fit!

- **Justice and Equality Fund** – Rosa asked to develop and manage this crowd funded programme.
- The JEF aims to bring an end to the culture of harassment, abuse and impunity, making work- and other places **just, safe** and **equitable** for all and ensuring that anyone who has been subjected to harassment and abuse, including sexual violence at work, is better able to access support and justice.
- Big aspirations, relatively small amount of funding! Hard choices and creative approaches needed.
- How we made grants could be as important as what we funded.
- Rosa used participatory grantmaking (PGM) to design the programme and make decisions on some grants.



Developing the Justice and Equality Fund

- Rosa's overarching vision is justice and equality for all women and girls in the UK - Rosa is committed to challenging conventional power structures – participatory approach to model the sort of change it wants to see.
- JEF is the collaborative action of activists, donors, women's services and grantmakers. Rosa brought in others such as trade unions, HR specialists and lawyers. The JEF was co-designed with three distinct elements
 - 1) Service provision for victims/survivors of sexual harassment
 - 2) Activism through a challenge fund
 - 3) Strategic communications network



Participation A Step Further – Decision Making

Grantees (previous recipients) already involved in Rosa decision making panels. But delegating decision making further reflected values of Rosa and the JEF.

Many of the grants we already make are about supporting women to lead change in their communities, so putting them in charge of the grant-making too just makes sense to us.

Concerns expressed by JEF steering group later echoed by some applicants e.g. would the process be fair? would some groups be discriminated against? would bigger organisations be at an advantage? would the climate of competition over funding negatively impact on organisations' judgements? Rosa put forward that there was also a mission-specific imperative to take this opportunity to innovate, and that risks could be mitigated or managed.

Benefits seemed clear: values the knowledge and expertise of women's organisations, draws in more voices, seeing other applicants' ideas could encourage collaboration, a sense of being part of a movement and also 'raise the bar' as all applicants got the chance to see what they were up against. Importantly, we highlighted that as the UK's women's fund, Rosa was committed to challenging conventional power structures, and that delegating decision-making reflected the values behind Rosa and the JEF.



The process

Inspired by other women's funds taking this approach, in particular FemFund in Poland.

- PGM design for grants of up to £25K
- 3 minute video app and short written form
- Applications screened internally for fit with fund and eligibility
- Quarter screened out at shortlisting
- Applicants asked to view a series of randomly selected video applications so that each application received five views. Each cluster was unique.
- Applicants asked to rank videos 1-5 (one strongest) with short written explanation for decision.
- Compiled results meant top 11 were awarded grants (80% of the funding pot).
- 20% retained for panel to address gaps or support proposals with particular value. Further four applications funded.



Learning

- The model we used is administratively time consuming, but the process itself is likely to have agency in contributing to change.
- Slightly different set of applications funded to what we would have anticipated. However broad spectrum of work funded.
- In one instance comments appeared to show an underlying bias which the panel could redress with the 20% of funds retained.
- Retaining 20% also put rest to some concerns from applicants
- JEF panel felt more comfortable having gone through the process.

We learnt a lot from surveying the applicants (anonymously)!



The Survey

31 out of 44 responded. Feedback thoughtful and largely positive

- Over 80 per cent reviewed the applications in groups of staff and/or volunteers and/or service users, which often created a greater sense of involvement: *'All ten of us involved in watching the videos loved it! The service users felt so included, as did the volunteers. One service user has now started coming along to our sessions much more regularly since her involvement as she saw another side to our organisation and her potential input.'*
- 36 per cent found the ranking process difficult: *'It puts a fairly weighty responsibility on participants. The sense of competing with other like-minded women's groups was uncomfortable.'*
- 97 per cent learned more about what groups were doing in other areas and 87 per cent about different approaches to the work.
- 93% felt inspired by hearing about the work of other groups 'a great opportunity to inspire, motivate and empower others working to end violence against women; an opportunity to develop and recognise leadership in the field.
- 80 per cent felt an increased sense of connectedness and/or solidarity with other groups and *'felt we weren't alone in struggling in an under-appreciative world/government!'*
- 71 per cent felt their knowledge was valued and their expertise recognised: *'We had a voice in decision-making, it felt empowering. The process felt much more transparent.'*
- 94 per cent would apply to a fund using PGM in the future

The process empowers, inspires leadership, builds a sense of connectedness and solidarity, develops analytical skills.



Looking ahead...

- On balance a positive experience. Rosa committed to doing PGM again.
- Expand our guidance about the process as some raised concern about their own and others' impartiality when competition for funding was involved.
- Expand our guidance when the fund launches about the process and share some of our previous learning.
- Explore using the participatory model further in relation to other funds and other aspects of our work.
- Continue to inform and inspire our trustees, our panels/steering group and our donors about the PGM approach

