

The Fundraising for Social Change: National Demonstration Project

Executive Summary

While it has long been recognized that not-for-profit organizations in Canada need to diversify their sources of funding, most grassroots organizations continue to be overly reliant on a few major funders, seriously limiting their potential for autonomous action.

The FSC project believes that not-for-profit organizations working for social change need to increase their autonomy and diversify their fundraising, including placing much more emphasis on building a base of individual donors from their own ‘constituency’ and wider community, and in so doing become more autonomous and dynamic purveyors of new ideas and community leadership.

Building on the innovative work being done in the United States by Kim Klein and the Grassroots Institute for Fundraising Training (GIFT), and the extensive work coordinated by the Concordia University Institute in Management and Community Development (IMCD), the demonstration project will coordinate intense and on-going training and development for nine grassroots organizations across Canada. The major goal of the *FSC project* will be to explore, test, and promote the development of individual-donor based fundraising to overcome the internal and external constraints that have made the ideal of self-sufficiency so hard to attain.

The *FSC project* proposes to address the challenge of achieving dynamic self-sufficiency by creating and implementing a three-year long demonstration project involving nine organizations in Montreal, Ottawa, and Toronto, that will ultimately result in a mutual-support network of social change organizations across Canada. The project will endorse and promote local resource mobilization and animate a variety of local and national networks and resources to develop long-term responses to the structural barriers facing not-for-profit organizations in undertaking values-based individual donor fundraising.

The learnings and outcomes of the demonstration project will be shared and disseminated across Canada through the Concordia Institute’s Summer Program, learning circles within each city, and through a grassroots fundraising website and publications aimed at a national audience. *The Fundraising for Social Change (FSC) demonstration project* will show how fundraising represents an ideal opportunity for social change groups to put their values into action, while building strong and lasting relationships of moral, political, and financial support.

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