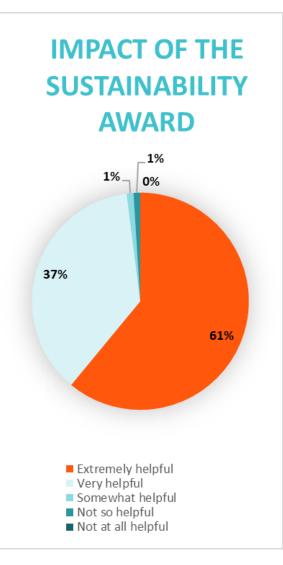
# global for children

# Maya Ajmera Sustainability Award

**Impact Assessment Report** 



"Global Fund for Children laid the foundation of our current advanced work for child protection. Thank you GFC!" – Meraj Hamayun Khan, Chief Executive of De Laas Gul Welfare Programme (Pakistan)



### Maya Ajmera Sustainability Award Impact Assessment Report

Conducted by Lida Minasyan, Atlas Corps and William Ascher Fellow

#### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 About the Maya Ajmera Sustainability Award

The Sustainability Award is named in honor of the founder of Global Fund for Children (GFC), Maya Ajmera. In 2005, GFC began offering these awards to enhance its grassroots partners' organizational sustainability and long-term viability. The Sustainability Award is usually GFC's final investment in some of its highest-performing partners during the final year of the primary grant funding relationship. These organizations remain in GFC's global network, assisting other grassroots partners and benefiting from GFC's continued capacity-development inputs, such as convenings and leveraging of funds from other sources.

Recipients can use the Sustainability Award to purchase office space or property; secure fundraising expertise; invest in management and staff development; improve communications; strengthen and advance institutional infrastructure; or for systems development or improvement, revenue generation activities, or reserve funds, among other projects.

#### 1.2 Purpose, objectives and scope of the assessment

Since 2005, 144 organizations have received the Sustainability Award. Though GFC received some feedback on the award during this period, the information was not collected, stored, and analyzed in a systematic and consistent manner. The lack of a consolidated impact review of this exceptional award led to this comprehensive assessment examining its impact on different aspects of the recipient organizations.

The aim of this research is to reveal and analyze the long-term impact of the Sustainability Award on specific aspects of recipients' organizational development. GFC will use the key findings to enhance the overall impact of the award based on best practices and the recipients' recommendations. The primary focus of this assessment is to delve into and review the development of organizations in several specific criteria interpreted as *organizational sustainability* and *long-term viability*:

Planning

- Fundraising
- Financial Management
- Governance
- Human Resource Development
- Monitoring, Learning, and Evaluation
- Community and External Relations
- Information Technology (IT)
- Networking and Partnership building

The specific objectives of this research are to:

- reveal the main areas in which the organizations invested their award
- assess the extent to which the award was effective for organizational sustainability and development
- outline the advancement of award recipients on each of the above-mentioned categories
- provide recommendations to GFC for improving the Sustainability Awards

#### 1.3 Methodology

The data collection method employed for this research is an online questionnaire (see Annex 1) distributed among 134 organizations from 38 countries, whose contact information was available at the time of conducting the survey. Within the provided timeframe of approximately one month, 77 organizations submitted their responses, which constitutes 57% of the 134 organizations with available contact information. As a reference point, the average response rate for the Center for Effective Philanthropy's signature Grantee Perception Report is approximately 60%. The research is a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches and includes direct quotes from respondents.

This research poses its own integral limitations, considering the selected method of data collection, sampling, scope of the assignment, and the analysis. The following are some pitfalls affecting the assessment and its results:

- Selection bias: Participation in the survey was left to the discretion of each organization, which creates a selection bias, as the opinions of the possible informants who did not participate in the research could influence and differ from the outcomes of the assessment.
- Response bias: The respondents may have consciously or subconsciously given a response that
  they perceive the researcher wants to hear. In this context, the inherent power dynamic between
  funder and grantee cannot be ignored, as it may result in increased positive responses from GFC's
  grassroots partners. Additionally, answers may be subjective based on personal understanding
  and interpretation of what is considered effective and what is not.

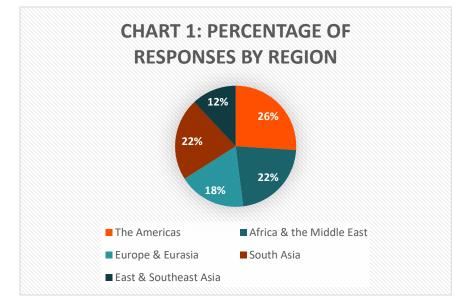
#### 2. Findings and Analysis

#### 2.1 General findings

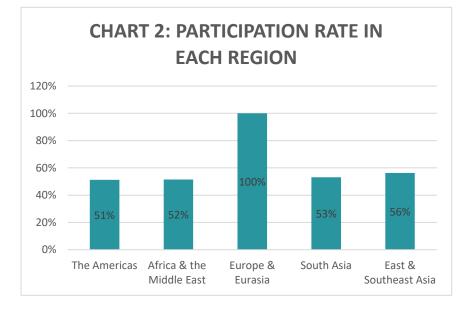
As mentioned above, organizations from 38 countries in five regions took part in this research assessment:

Africa & the Middle East: Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Tanzania, South Africa, Senegal, Togo East & Southeast Asia: Cambodia, China, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Timor-Leste Europe & Eurasia: Ukraine, Serbia, Romania, Georgia, Bulgaria, Kyrgyzstan South Asia: India, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka

**The Americas:** Peru, Honduras, Bolivia, United States, Trinidad & Tobago, Dominican Republic, Brazil, Nicaragua, Jamaica, Colombia, Paraguay, Mexico.



As seen in Chart 1, the total number of 77 respondents is divided into the following participation rate from each region: The Americas-26%; Africa & the Middle East-22%: South Asia-22%: Europe and Eurasia—18%; and East & Southeast Asia-12%. The shortfall of this response rate is that it does not accurately reflect the number of organizations from each region that received the award, meaning there was an uneven participation rate across regions.



To reveal the participation rate from each region, the percentage was calculated from the total number of organizations that received the award per region and the number of the organizations who submitted the survey. As we can see, around half of the organizations participated in the survey from each region, except from the Europe & Eurasia region, where all 14 award recipients provided feedback.

Respondents were asked to identify the year they received the award to verify that the organizations had sufficient time to utilize the funds and observe its impact. It is assumed that the best time period for observing the award's impact is no more than ten years and no less than two years since the award was received.



As observed in Chart 3. most organizations (75%) had 3-10 years to monitor the long- and medium-term impact of the award. Recipients from before 2007 and after 2015 constitute only 17% and 8% respectively, which demonstrates the strong representation of within organizations the desired time frame.

The first set of analyses looked at the primary projects and activities for which recipient

organizations used the Sustainability Award. This is a primary finding, to reveal the relevance and efficiency of the award affecting organizational sustainability and development.

The respondents were invited to mention one or more aspects that the Sustainability Award supported. As apparent from Charts 4.1 and 4.2, there is a rather extended list of categories to describe how funds were utilized.

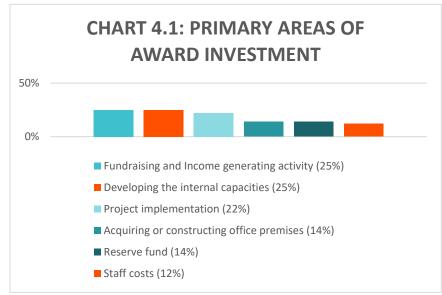


Chart 4.1 underlines six primary areas of investment. It reveals that a quarter of respondents used the award to bring more funds to the organization; another quarter focused on knowledge and skill development of their teams.

The main areas on which internal capacities focused included preventing violence against children, mechanisms to improve academic

performance of children, fundraising, grant writing, generating income, social work, forensic interviewing, developing projects and activities for children and women, strategic planning, team building, management, English language, finances, and leadership. It is worth noting that many of the NGOs described fundraising as a separate category and as a part of enhancing internal organizational capacities.

Among the organizations that used the Sustainability Award for building their internal capacities, 37% are from Europe & Eurasia and 26% are from South Asia. Of the organizations that invested in fundraising and income-generating activities, 37% are from the Americas and 26% are from Africa and the Middle East.

Less than 22% of the organizations directly supported their programs, which is the third most common use for the award.



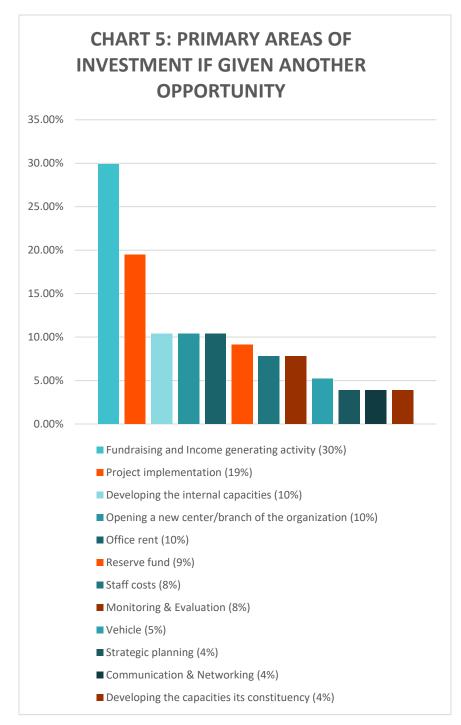
Two organizations, one from Africa and the Middle East and one from the Americas, mentioned a drawback in how they used their award. These organizations explained that they spent some of the award to build the capacities of a team member who left the organization before investing their new knowledge in the organization.

The data in Chart 4.2 indicates other diverse categories in which the award was invested.

"It was the first time for Vikramshila to receive an award of this kind and it has been extremely helpful for us. It helped us to explore new ways of fundraising. Not only has it helped us to sustain the project, but also effected in enriching it by adding more layers." – Shubhra Chatterji, Director of Vikramshila (India)

To further explore possible enhancements to the Sustainability Award, it is practical to define trends regarding how organizations would use the funds if they received the award for a second time, considering lessons learned from the initial experience. To this end, the respondents were asked what they would use the funds for if they had a second chance to win the award.

The most remarkable observation to emerge from this data is that 30% of respondents would use the award in the same category as they did the first time. The main reason underlying this result could be twofold: we can either infer that the utilization of funds was successful the first time, and the organizations would therefore repeat the same experience, or it may indicate that they require additional funding in these areas. Nonetheless, if one-third of organizations would use the grant for the same cause, it could mean that they did not find any other category which would work better for their organization.

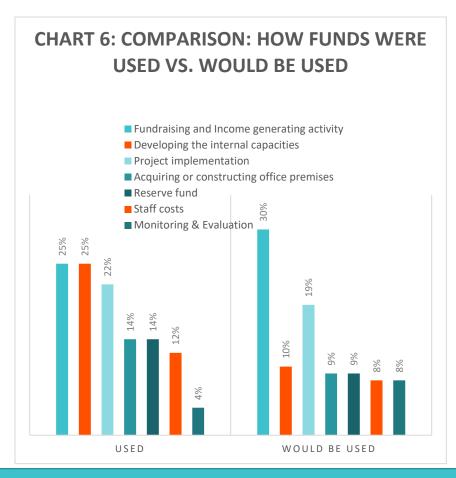


The data in Chart 5 indicates the main aspects on which the funding would be used if the organizations had another opportunity to use the award. The top uses for the funding remain about the same: fundraising and income generating activities, project implementation, and developing internal capacities are still the top three choices. However, it is noteworthy that there are changes in terms of percentages in these and other categories, as well as new areas in which the organizations would want to invest.

For example, four organizations said they would buy a vehicle, including, specifically, a vehicle for people with disabilities. Importantly, some organizations brought uр interesting categories, such as using the money for best publications, practice for developing an alternative report on the Convention of the Rights of the Child, for developing and implementing an advocacy plan, and for organizing an annual fundraising conference.

Others would use the award for institutional strengthening, scaling up their model, technology solutions to enhance program efficiency, office maintenance, co-funding a project, and philanthropic support to the target group.

Chart 6 demonstrates a comparison between how respondents invested their award, versus how they would invest it if given another opportunity. A quarter of respondents originally invested in fundraising and income generating activities, but 30% of respondents said they would use it on those categories if



given a second chance. The most significant decrease in interest is in developing the internal capacities, which dropped by 15%. On the other hand, interest in monitoring and evaluation grew by 4%.

"This grant was extremely helpful to sustain and grow the organization. We are very thankful to GFC for this." – Sohini Chakraborty, Founding Director of Kolkata Sanved (India)

#### Library-Cultural Center for People with Disabilities "Tanadgoma" Georgia

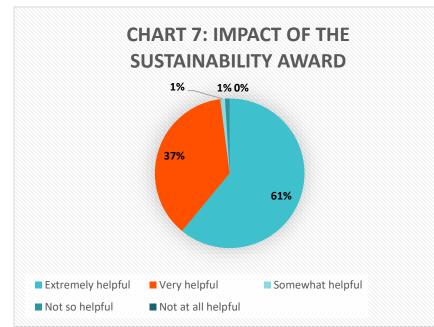
"Each element of the grant award was effective." - Inga Sharikadze, Founder

Tanadgoma supports children and young people living with disabilities in Georgia by promoting inclusive education, implementing cultural-educational programs, and providing vocational training with the aim of further employment for young people with disabilities. The organization used its \$25,000 award to purchase additional office space in 2011. Currently, the office space is being rented out as an income generating source, which supports the needs of the main office (communal and operational costs). Due to the Sustainability Award, Tanadgoma obtained a permanent source of income, as well as additional space for other projects and activities, if needed. If given a second opportunity to win the award, the organization would use it for capacity development projects and for an income generating activity within the framework of social entrepreneurship.

#### Kids In Need of Direction Trinidad & Tobago

#### Jill De Bourg, General Manager

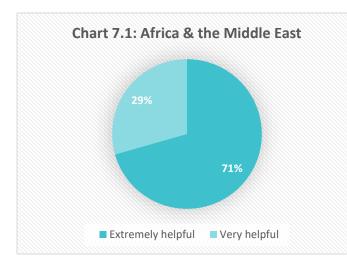
Kids In Need of Direction aims to empower children by providing opportunities for holistic development through programs that address their educational, physical, emotional and social development needs. Kids In Need of Direction used its \$25,000 award to hire two new staff members to focus on fundraising, and created a reserve fund to help with cash flow and in short-term emergencies. Jill believes that the organization recorded significant improvements since receiving the Sustainability Award in 2007. According to her, the award made it possible to develop a foundation from which KIND was able to build on. The organization appreciated GFC's guidance and follow-up support on the impact of the award. KIND advises GFC to conduct an organizational capacity assessment on all potential recipients prior to granting the award, as well as to include a sustainability training component for recipients. If the organization had a second chance, it would use the award to conduct an external organizational capacity assessment to identify gaps and potential solutions; to develop an extensive income generation plan to meet the specific needs of KIND; and to incorporate a multipurpose rental space.

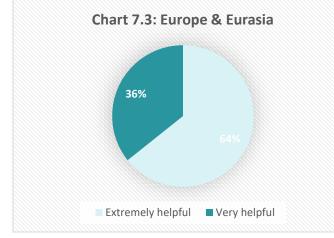


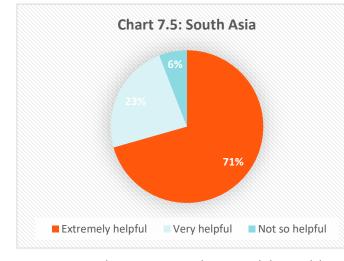
#### 2.2 Impact of the Sustainability Award

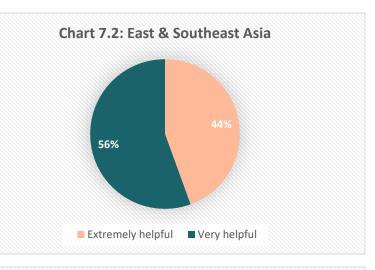
Recipients assessed the award's general impact on a simple scale of 1-5. The vast majority of respondents said that the award was "Extremely helpful" (61%) or "Very helpful" (37%). Only 2% of respondents said that the award was "Somewhat helpful" or "Not so helpful."

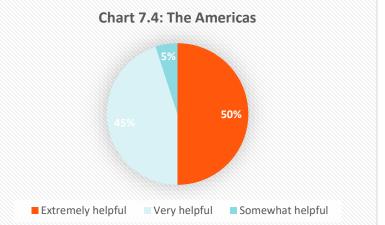
Respondents' opinions were also disaggregated by region (Charts 7.1 - 7.5).











"The support of GFC was always timely and extremely helpful. Thanks to the consecutive projects supported by GFC, our organization grew up and became one of the most valued NGOs in the field of children's rights protection." – Jivka Marinova, Executive Director of Gender Education, Research and Technologies Foundation (Bulgaria)

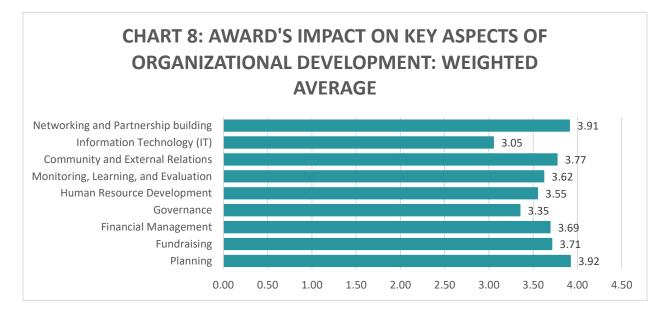
A comparison of responses among regions reveals that respondents in Africa & the Middle East and South Asia were most satisfied with their awards.

The interpretation of two main desired impacts of the

award, organizational sustainability and long-term viability relies on the organizational performance in the framework of the nine categories listed in Table 1. This section of the analysis delves into the extent to which the organizations improved in these nine categories.

Table 1	1 (No Improvement)	2	3	4	5 (Significant Improvement)
Planning	5%	5%	14%	43%	33%
Fundraising	7%	7%	19%	44%	23%
Financial Management	7%	9%	27%	23%	34%
Governance	16%	5%	28%	30%	21%
Human Resource Development	10%	7%	25%	35%	23%
Monitoring, Learning, and Evaluation	7%	9%	19.50%	45%	19.50%
Community and External Relations	10%	5%	12%	43%	30%
Information Technology (IT)	18%	16%	26%	23%	17%
Networking and Partnership building	9%	0%	17%	39%	35%

The lowest rating was given to Information Technology (IT) with 34% of organizations marking this category as "not been improved" or "not so improved." The next lowest-rated category is Governance, according to 21% of the respondents. At the other end of the ratings, around 75% of respondents said that Planning and Networking and Partnership Building were the most improved areas of their organizational capacity. 76% of respondents classified Planning as "very improved" or "significantly improved", and 74% gave the same rating to Networking and Partnership Building.

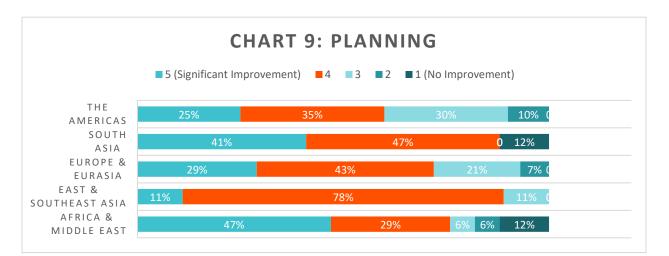


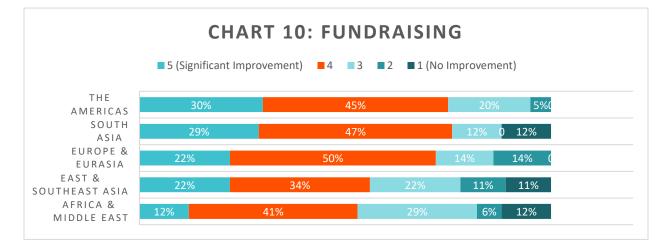
It is worth comparing categories for which the grant was used and categories that the organizations felt were most improved. For example, although a quarter of respondents used their award to support

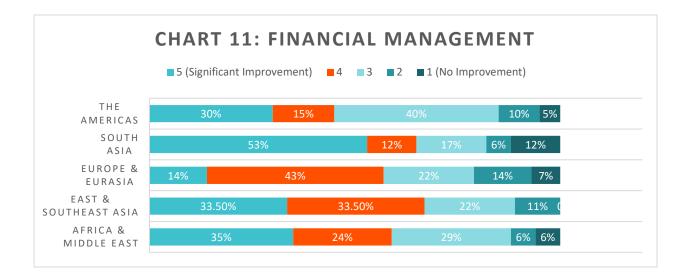
Fundraising and Income-generating Activities (Chart 4.1), improvement in the categories of Fundraising and Financial Management is classed as average (Chart 8). Considering the number of requests from partner organizations for more support with mobilizing resources through donors and/or self-funding activities, it can be assumed that there is a significant need for supporting organizations by engaging more funding and diversifying the sources of funding.

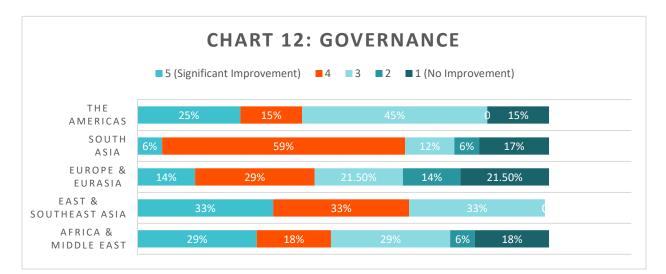
Additionally, it is surprising that only 6% of respondents claimed that they used the award to support strategic planning (Chart 4.1), but 76% said the award helped them to significantly develop their capacities in Planning (Table 1). It may be that many respondents did not consider strategic planning a separate category from capacity development, for which many of the partners used the award, and which could lead to significantly improved capacities in "Planning." This part of the assessment demonstrates that although there are correlations between how the funding was used and which categories improved, it can be inferred that the award had a more holistic impact on general organizational development.

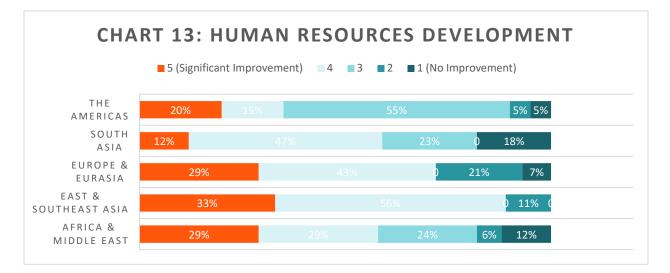
Reviewing the advancement of each capacity within each region will help to locate the further capacity development needs and interest for advancement.

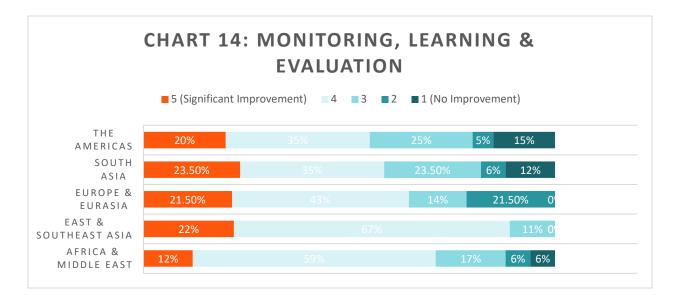


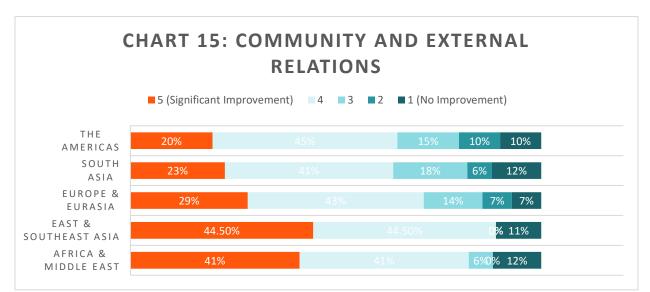


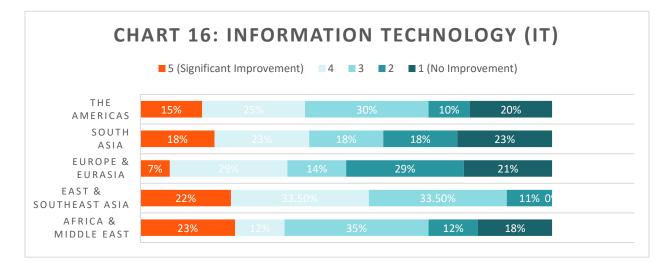


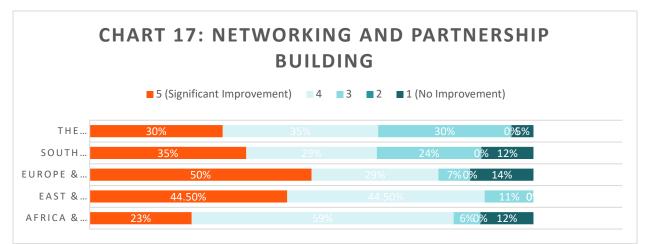




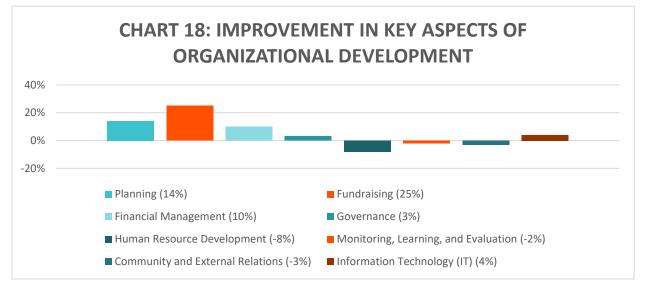








Since 2009, Global Fund for Children has used a tool called Organizational Capacity Index (OCI) to monitor the capacities of grassroots organizations in eight areas of organizational development on a scale of 1-5. To reveal the organizations' improvement rates, a comparison was made between each organization's last available OCI index and its current impact assessment rates in those same categories. As we can see



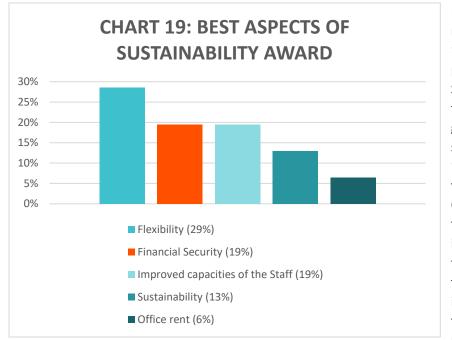
in Chart 18<sup>1</sup>, the majority of aspects have improved, whereas there are declines in three areas. The most improved areas are Fundraising (by 25%) and Planning (by 14%) and the most declined area is Human Resource Development (by 8%). While reviewing these results, we should keep in mind that the OCI is a self-assessment tool, which creates some level of subjectivity.

#### 2.3 Effectiveness and Gaps of the Sustainability Award

"The best aspect of Sustainability Award: a unique chance given to the organization to decide what priorities to use the award and encouragement for successful work and partnership." – Nana Doliashvili, Director of Tbilisi Youth House Foundation (Georgia)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Please note that OCI does not include "Networking and Partnership Building" category, hence this aspect was not compared.

Overall, feedback from the Sustainability Award recipients was very positive. The collected qualitative information was processed and categorized to summarize the primary benefits of the award.



Nearly one third of respondents mentioned "flexibility" as the most the positive aspect of Sustainability Award. Since there is some level of generality, ambiguity, and subjectivity of how we define "flexibility," the collected data was reviewed in greater detail. Close examination revealed that the organizations interpret "flexibility" as GFC's trust in its grassroots partners to utilize the funds in the best interest of children, relying on the most relevant areas of need and filling in the gaps. In

addition, flexibility was used to describe the application process and minimal paperwork; one partner qualified flexibility as "vital for NGOs." According to the respondents, the flexibility of the award immensely supports the organizations' growth and expansion. The flexibility to allocate resources to priority areas of need is strongly appreciated, as is encouragement for success opportunity for partnership.

## *"We have chosen our priorities ourselves and this is very important to us. Also, we were enabled to develop strategically, not only operatively."* – Jelena Hrnjak, Program Manager of Atina (Serbia)

## *"GFC respected our autonomy in identifying the needs of the Incest Trauma Center – Belgrade, and we're very grateful for this." –* Dusica Popadic, Director of Incest Trauma Center (Serbia)

Nearly one fifth of respondents highlighted "financial security" and "improved capacities of the staff" among best aspects of the award. We discussed "improved capacities" in the previous section, so here we will examine how respondents describe "financial security." Financial security is described as:

- a critical investment
- support at a crucial time to avoid a financial crisis
- seed for innovation
- a safety net
- an investment that supports fundraising for a much more sustainable future for the organization.

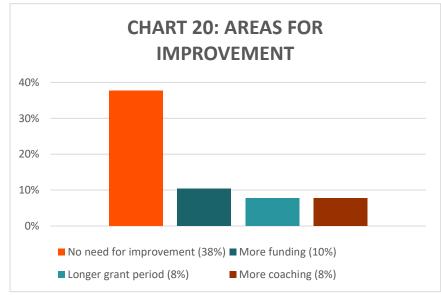
"Sustainability" is another term used by 13% of organizations to describe the advantages of the Sustainability Award. This term can mean many different things: some organizations believe more sustainability means a better reputation and increased visibility in society, while others described it as being able to continue implementing activities even after funding ends. Some organizations believe that

sustainability means maintaining viability for at least ten years, successfully securing more funding for ongoing projects, or having sense of financial security and being able to improve in the process.

## *"Now we have three foreign organizations that are financing the activities of the social project. If not for the support of GFC, we would not have achieved what we have been doing now."* – Ronald Zarate Herrera, Director of Centro Yanapanakasun (Peru)

"Office rent," which includes renting or purchasing office space, was mentioned by 6% of respondents as an advantage of the award, benefitting operational stability. Other positive aspects of the Sustainability Award that respondents mentioned included the opportunity for enhanced branding and publicity, enhanced credibility, growth and development, cooperation, trust and follow-up, networking, and a steady income. The respondents appreciated that they could invest in human resources, their activities and operations, strategic planning, supporting children, monitoring and evaluation, and building skills of their constituencies. In addition, GFC's interest and recognition, as well the application process, were rated positively.

# "GFC is an ideal donor in the sense that its support is very strong, but it does not interfere with its partner, nor does it make unwelcome demands and puts pressure which negatively affects the working environment. It was GFC, which laid the foundation of our current advanced work for child protection. Thank you GFC!" – Meraj Hamayun Khan, Chief Executive of De Laas Gul Welfare Programme (Pakistan)



The respondents' overall positive feedback and appreciation for distinct aspects of the Sustainability Award corroborates its critical impact. Yet, ultimate conclusions cannot be drawn without recommendations for future improvement.

> The results, as seen in Chart 20, indicate that many respondents felt that there is no need to improve the award. Among responses that specifically recommended areas for improvement, the most common response was the desire to increase the amount of the award. Ten percent of respondents believe more funding could ensure a more sustainable future for their organizations.<sup>2</sup>

Six organizations would prefer

to spend the award over a longer period, at least 2-3 years. According to these organizations, the Sustainability Award had a transformative effect on their programs, and they believe a longer grant period would enhance its impact.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The amount of the Sustainability Award usually ranges from \$25.000 - \$50.000

Another six award winners recommended more coaching and guidance from GFC about how to invest the award. This can include mentoring the development of sustainability strategy and providing pro-bono services to enhance institutional development. The partners recommended conducting an organizational capacity assessment of the potential award recipients and including a sustainability training component. Along these lines, two organizations recommended that GFC provides technical support, such as human resource management, strategy development, and training in Monitoring and Evaluation. The minimum expectation from the organizations was that program staff be available for at least one phone call to explain the scope of spending the award.

Additional suggestions included:

- Increase efforts to mobilize funds, including by helping recipients connect with other donors and by raising the visibility of the award to attract new funders.
- Consult with partners first to identify the greatest need for organizational development and then match the award to satisfy the need.
- Increase networking opportunities among fellow award winners and other grassroots organizations.
- Allow applications from graduated GFC partners.

*"The sustainability grant has contributed to the organization's stability and enhanced its credibility among other stakeholders and partners."* – Betty Gahima, Executive Secretary of BENISHYAKA (Rwanda)

#### 3. Conclusion

This research offers unprecedented and comprehensive evidence for the impact of Sustainability Award on its recipients. It extends GFC knowledge of the successful aspects of the award and indicates areas for improvement.

It can be inferred that the overall impact of Sustainability Award was significant for different aspects of organizational development. The majority of recipients invested in raising more funds and developing staff capacity. Overall, 61% of respondents found the award "extremely helpful" and 37% found it "very helpful." Interestingly, the two areas most improved by the organizations, were Planning and Networking and Partnership Building, which is a testament to the award's holistic impact on organizational development.

*"FDNC continues to have cherished memories and greatly recognizes the support of the GFC."* – Samuel W. Watulatsu Promoter, Chief Executive Officer of Foundation for Development of Needy Communities (Uganda)

The main findings make very clear that the organizations face an ongoing challenge to mobilize resources. This is also vividly illustrated in the increased interest of organizations to invest in enhancement of fundraising and resource mobilization. The majority of respondents appreciated the flexibility of GFC's support, as well as the financial security and improved capacities ensured by the award. According to 38%

of organizations, there is no need for improvement to the Sustainability Award, yet a number of organizations provided valuable recommendations for to enhance its impact.

A list of recommendations, developed based on the research findings and organizations' suggestions, is presented below.

#### 4. Recommendations

- 1. Keep the flexibility of the Sustainability Award.
- 2. Extend the term of the award to 2-3 years.
- 3. Increase the average amount of the award.
- 4. Provide more opportunities and leveraging for capacity development.
- 5. Provide better coaching and guidance for how the organizations should use the Sustainability Award.
- 6. Improve the follow up and feedback mechanisms and engagement with organizations after graduation.
- 7. Enhance efforts to connect grassroots partners with other funders and to help them mobilize more resources.
- 8. Look for creative methods for increasing the visibility of partner organizations, as this can lead to more credibility and more funding for the organization.

*"We enjoyed every moment we worked with GFC."* – Twesigye J Kaguri, Founder of Nyaka AIDS Orphans Project (Uganda)

#### Annex 1

#### Questionnaire

**Question 1\*:** Please choose your region.

- o The Americas
- Africa & the Middle East
- o Europe & Eurasia
- o South Asia
- East & Southeast Asia

Question 2\*: Please mention your country.

**Question 3\*:** Name of Organization

Question 4\*: Name and title of the person completing this survey

Question 5\*: Email address

Question 6\*: When did you receive the Sustainability Award from Global Fund for Children?

Month

Year

Question 7\*: What was the Sustainability Award used for? (max. 50 words)

**Question 8\*:** How would you assess the overall impact of Sustainability Award on the effectiveness, sustainability and further development of your organization?

- Extremely helpful
- Very helpful
- Somewhat helpful
- Not so helpful
- Not at all helpful

**Question 9\*:** From a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being no improvement and 5 being significant improvement, please assess the extent to which the capacities of your organization were enhanced in the below mentioned categories due to receiving the Sustainability Award.

	1 (No Improvement)	2	3	4	5 (Significant Improvement)
Planning					
Fundraising					
Financial Management					
Governance					
Human Resource Development					
Monitoring, Learning, and Evaluation					
Community and External Relations					
Information Technology (IT)					
Networking and Partnership building					

#### Question 10: Comments

**Question 11\*:** What would you mention as the best aspect of Sustainability Award? (Please be specific with 1-2 examples)

**Question 12\*:** How could we improve any aspect of the Sustainability Award? (Please be specific with 1-2 examples)

**Question 13\*:** If you had a chance to apply for the Sustainability Award for the second time, what would you use it for?

Question 14\*: Would you be interested in sharing your successes with GFC for publicity purposes?