



Spark Fund – Southeast Asia – Climate Justice

Learning Journey

About Global Fund for Children

Global Fund for Children (GFC) invests in grassroots organizations that improve the lives of children and youth challenged by poverty, injustice, and discrimination. We provide flexible, small grants and help our partners develop their organizational capacity to realize their goals and dreams. We are committed to advancing the rights of children and youth, and we fund organizations that are tackling tough issues in our four thematic focus areas: education, gender equity, youth empowerment, and freedom from violence and exploitation. We seek to boost the collective efforts of our partners to influence transformative change and mobilize networks, and we encourage our partners to learn from each other. By pairing flexible funding with targeted capacity development services, we support community-led groups to shift social norms, policies, and practices to foster lasting change for children and youth. Since 1997, we have invested \$56 million in more than 1,000 organizations worldwide.

Overview of Learning Collaboration

GFC, with support from Porticus Foundation, seeks a Learning Partner to accompany the [Spark Fund](#), a youth-led participatory fund, on a learning journey to take place **from September 2023 to June 2025**. Through a participatory co-designed learning process, in close collaboration with GFC, the Learning Partner will focus on the following objectives:

- i. Contribute to the evidence for applying a participatory grantmaking (PGM) process with young people, examining its advantages and challenges.
- ii. Using existing research on the benefits of PGM, produce evidence-based materials that will be used to influence the philanthropic funding space to become more participatory and shift power to young people and communities.
- iii. Examine the role technology can play in PGM processes with youth, both in facilitating access and inclusion and in creating barriers.
- iv. Create a resource for philanthropic organizations interested in PGM with young people by documenting comparative learnings and experiences from the various Spark Fund rounds.
- v. Seek opportunities to engage young people in co-designing and co-implementing the learning journey.

The learning journey will not be a traditional Monitoring and Evaluation activity of the outcomes of the current Spark Fund round. Instead, the process will entail a high degree of creativity, adaptability, and comfort with an emergent learning approach. During the design phase of the

learning journey, GFC and Learning Partner, with support from Porticus, will identify opportunities to share emerging learnings externally with relevant stakeholders in the philanthropic space, both in Asia and globally.

The learning journey should be participatory in nature. Therefore, the target groups include everyone touched by the initiative – the youth panelists who are the project’s grantmakers and fund designers; the youth grantees selected by the panelists; the funders of the Spark Fund; and GFC staff working on the project. In addition, the Learning Partner themselves is also a target group of the journey, as their experience co-designing and co-implementing the learning journey with young people will also be important to take into account. We intend to also include a larger community of interest where we will share the results in hopes of influencing future funding decisions to support additional participatory grantmaking (PGM) work in the region.

Learning Questions

These are overarching questions which will be further co-designed with the Learning Partner. Many of these general questions will include more detailed sub-questions once the co-design process is underway.

PGM with Young People

1. Based on the experience of the several rounds of the Spark Fund, what difference can PGM make for youth and their communities?
 - i. What was the intended impact of the Spark Fund? Was the impact achieved at a global, regional, and/or local level? What were some of the Fund’s unexpected outcomes?
 - ii. What effect does the multicultural and multilingual composition of the different Spark Fund rounds have on the overall course of the Fund (including the initial team building, criteria setting, application design, outreach, review, shortlisting, and decision-making)? How has the composition of the rounds affected the PGM process and its outcomes?
 - iii. Does PGM improve access to grantmaking for traditionally marginalized groups, including young leaders?
 - iv. How does a PGM process for youth compare to more traditional grantmaking models in youth-focused spaces? What are the advantages of a PGM approach in this context? What are the challenges it presents?
 - v. What difference did the format of the different Spark Fund rounds – entirely virtual versus hybrid – make in the PGM process?

Flexible Funding

2. How does access to flexible funding for young leaders affect their ability to create change in their community?
 - i. In what areas of work do young leaders typically invest flexible funds?

- ii. Does flexible funding allow young people to be better able to create change in specific issue areas in their community?
- iii. Does access to flexible funding prepare youth-led organizations to secure other forms of funding and/or have a stronger voice when seeking additional funds?

PGM and Funder Buy-In

3. Based on the experience of the several rounds of the Spark Fund around the world, what difference does participatory grantmaking make for panel members and funders? What is the impetus for funders to buy into this approach to grantmaking and working with youth?
 - i. What impact did the PGM approach have on the panel members of the different Spark Fund rounds? Did the experience of being involved in this way impact the way they work?
 - ii. As the administrator and facilitator of the Fund, what has been GFC's experience with PGM and youth-led work since the launch of the Spark Fund? How has GFC's learning and work on the Spark Fund evolved since the pilot round? What have been some of the key milestones and key learning points throughout this time?

Methodology and Possible Activities

GFC expects the Learning Partner to propose key methodologies and specific activities of the learning journey, and they will be vetted and finetuned with the GFC team. The process should be participatory and iterative. Thus, while a roadmap of general milestones will be identified in advance, flexibility throughout the learning journey will be essential. Below are some possible examples of the learning journey's activities as envisioned by GFC:

- Desk research of PGM approaches with youth, compared to traditional youth-focused grantmaking (benchmarking cohort TBD), both for the current round and the previous ones;
- Participatory learning framework design and ongoing implementation with GFC's and Porticus's guidance;
- Pre-survey of panel members and youth-led partners (separately) on several questions identified in the learning framework, possibly co-designed with panel members;
- Learning calls/group conversations between Learning Partner and panel members;
- Learning calls/group conversations between Learning Partner and youth-led partners;
- Learning calls/group conversations between Learning Partner and GFC;
- Ongoing learning sessions to share key highlights of the learning journey with relevant stakeholders in the philanthropic space in Asia and globally;
- Design of data tracking tool on identified indicators as part of the external learning framework;
- Mid-line learning check-in/activity with panel members, partners, and GFC (separately);
- End-line learning activity with panel members, partners, and GFC (separately);
 - This may also include a post-survey for comparison with the pre-survey;

- Final report(s) and materials produced by Learning Partner and validated by GFC (and, possibly, partners and/or panel members)

About the Learning Partner

The ideal Learning Partner:

- Has substantial experience in research, learning, and evaluation, specifically in the field of participatory grantmaking (PGM);
- Has experience on youth programs and civil society issues;
- Has experience with working in Southeast Asia;
- Speaks Vietnamese and/or Thai;
- Has creative approaches to participatory research.
- Possesses a solid understanding of PGM globally;
- Understands, respects, and reflects the ethos of youth and community;
- Is comfortable engaging with young people;
- Adapts quickly to unexpected situations;

As part of the learning framework, the Learning Partner is also expected to design ways to engage young people – both Spark Fund panel members and youth-led grantee partners – to incorporate their participation into learning journey. Given the youth-led nature of the fund, we welcome applications from youth-led or youth focused Learning Partners with experience in leading peer learning with youth.

The Learning Partner will work closely with the GFC Spark Fund Officer based in Vietnam and will report to Katherine Gilmour, Regional Co-Director of Europe and Eurasia, who leads the Spark Fund globally. The Learning Partner’s work will also be supported by GFC’s Learning and Evaluation team.

Timeline

At the moment, the timeline below is approximate and will depend in large part on the recruitment process for the in-country staff, the Learning Partner role, and the panel. As these elements become more solid, we will update the timeline as needed.

Learning Partner selected and onboarded	Late August / early September 2023
Internal design of learning journey with GFC	September 2023
Co-design process with young people	Late September / early October 2023

Panel Observation activities	September to December as agreed with GFC and co-designers
Reflection activities with key stakeholders	January 2024 onwards as agreed in co-designed learning framework
Midline Report	July 2024
Learning dissemination activities	July 2024 onwards as agreed in co-designed learning framework
Final Report	July 2025
<i>Ongoing learning sessions to share key highlights of the learning journey with relevant stakeholders (frequency and timeline TBD at a later date with Learning Partner and to be inserted throughout)</i>	

How to Apply

Interested applicants are asked to submit a **CV and a proposal of no more than 3-4 pages to sparkfund@globalfundforchildren.org**. The proposal should outline specifically how they would approach the design of this Learning Journey. Please also include 2 references. Applicants without regional experience and who do not possess the knowledge of Vietnamese and/or Thai will not be considered. Preference will be given to applicants who can prove that they have experience with PGM and youth programs.

Applicants are also asked to submit a detailed budget for the work. Please note that the overall budget for the Learning Journey is USD 70,000.

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis **until Friday, 28 July 2023**.