



GRANTEE PERCEPTION REPORT 2025

Summary

Key Findings and Recommendations from the Global Fund for Children 2025 Grantee Perception Report

Prepared by the Center for Effective Philanthropy

In September and October of 2025, the Center for Effective Philanthropy (CEP) surveyed Global Fund for Children (“GFC”) grantees and received comprehensive feedback from 154 grantees (a 79 percent response rate). The memo below outlines CEP’s summary of key strengths, opportunities, and recommendations. GFC’s grantee perceptions should be interpreted in light of its goals, strategy, and context.

Throughout this summary, GFC’s ratings are defined as higher than typical “when average ratings are above the 65th percentile in CEP’s overall dataset, “lower than typical” when they are below the 35th percentile, and “typical” when ratings fall between those thresholds. Ratings described as “significantly” higher or lower reflect statistically significant differences at a P-value less than or equal to .1.ft

GFC Grantees Report Experiencing Urgent Challenges

Global Fund for Children’s third Grantee Perception Report comes at an urgent time for grantees, who are experiencing significant challenges in their fields and communities of work, as well as challenges to their organizational sustainability.

- ▶ Nearly half of GFC grantees report having to reduce their services or staffing due to the current political environment, even at a time when most grantees report an increased demand for their services. More than half of GFC grantees report feeling concern about the well-being and safety of those their organizations are seeking to help, their staff, and/or their board members.
 - Importantly, nearly all GFC grantees report their work is primarily meant to benefit historically disadvantaged groups, particularly women and historically disadvantaged racial, indigenous, or ethnic groups.
- ▶ Grantees see Global Fund for Children as a crucial funder who understands the context in which they operate. Ratings place GFC in the top ten percent of CEP’s comparative dataset for its understanding of the people and communities grantees serve, the factors that affect their work, and the organizational challenges they face.
 - Grantees also recognize GFC’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, with ratings in the top 20 percent of CEP’s dataset for the extent to which GFC demonstrates an explicit commitment to DEI and clearly communicates what DEI means for its work.



“We lost two important youth-related projects that were central to our mission. This not only reduced opportunities for young people with disabilities to engage in leadership and advocacy but also forced us to scale back key activities planned for this year. In addition, we lost critical staff resources, which has placed extra pressure on our team and limited our overall capacity.”



“We were at risk of reducing staff, losing our office, and being suffocated by pressure to urgently attract new funding. GFC helped us cushion the crisis and secure additional resources.”

Impactful Grantmaking to Small Organizations

Across their ratings and written comments, grantees emphasize GFC's impact on their fields, communities, and organizations. In fact, ratings across all three areas of GFC's impact are higher than in any previous year. In their comments, grantees describe GFC as "a source of inspiration and strength," and "invaluable to us and our organizational growth."

- ▶ Supporting these perceptions of impact, ratings are also higher than typical for GFC's understanding of grantee fields and their organizational strategy and goals.

Grantmaking Characteristics

CEP's broader research finds that the way funders structure their grants is related to grantees' perceptions of a funder's impact, with grants that are relatively large, multi-year, and/or unrestricted associated with stronger perceptions of impact.

- ▶ More than three quarters of GFC grantees receive unrestricted funding, a proportion larger than at 90 percent of funders in CEP's dataset. In a custom question about grantmaking characteristics, grantees strongly agree that their grant was flexible enough to allow them to use the funding as their organization decides.
- ▶ About half of GFC grantees receive multi-year funding, a typical proportion. Still, when asked how GFC could improve in the future, grantees most frequently ask for longer-term funding, noting that "unless the funding is made long-term, the foundations of the organizations will not be strong."
- ▶ While GFC grantees receive very small grants compared to the typical funder (\$20K at the median compared to \$125K), these grants fund more than a quarter of its median grantee's annual operating budget. This proportion is larger than in previous years and more than six times larger than at the median funder in CEP's dataset.
 - In a custom question, a quarter of GFC grantees *disagree* (rating below a 4 on a 7-point scale) that their organization is prepared to sustain their work if GFC is unable to continue providing funding. In their written suggestions, some grantees ask for help in connecting with other funders and building broader donor networks.



"GFC should consider developing at least 5-year funding model for partners; that way we can work out sustainability right from the onset till the funding year is reached. Additionally, GFC could work with partners to develop and implement an alternative funding model over the period GFC is funding the partner."

Helpful and Wide-Spread Assistance Beyond the Grant

Beyond their grant, nearly all GFC grantees receive additional support, most often organizational capacity assistance. In a separate question, almost all GFC grantees report attending at least one GFC-led convening, and they rate these convenings exceptionally positively across a variety of aspects.

- ▶ Overall, the additional support grantee receive is extremely helpful. Ratings are higher than at the typical funder for support meeting an important need for grantee organizations and/or programs, and for being a worthwhile use of the time required of them.
- ▶ Most GFC grantees also report being part of its peer learning groups, and these grantees strongly agree that they have the freedom to choose how much they collaborate with other peers in their groups and that they felt part of a movement for change that is bigger than their organization.

- Though still in agreement, they agree least strongly that they have turned peer connections into collaborations or partnerships as a result of being part of their group.
- ▶ In their suggestions for GFC, grantees ask for even more assistance beyond the grant, most often peer learning opportunities and capacity-building or technical support, which grantees say would help them “grow their capacity beyond project implementation.”
- In a potential opportunity for reflection, ratings are in the bottom 15 percent of CEP’s dataset for GFC’s openness to feedback about the assistance beyond the grant it provides.



“GFC goes beyond just providing grants by investing in our capacity and strengthening us as a team. They guide us in making the right decisions without compromising our values while serving our beneficiaries. What I appreciate most is their passion for building us as an organization.”

Trust-Based Relationships and Clearer Communications

Grantees continue to emphasize relationships with GFC as one of its strengths, describing their contacts at GFC as “knowledgeable,” “respectful,” and “genuinely encouraging.”

- ▶ Ratings of grantee interactions with GFC staff remain higher than at the typical funder. In particular, ratings are in the top five percent of CEP’s dataset for how comfortable grantees feel approaching GFC if a problem arises, as well as GFC’s openness to ideas from grantees.
 - In a custom question, grantees strongly agree that their relationship with GFC has introduced them to new ideas, relationships, or opportunities, positively affected the wellbeing of their staff, and that they see GFC as partners working with them to solve problems.
- ▶ Supporting these exceptional ratings, nearly all GFC grantees interact with their contacts at least once every few months, and nearly all grantees report an in-person or virtual site visit. Those who interact with their contacts monthly, 63 percent, rate GFC’s impact on and understanding of their organizations, communities and fields even higher.
- ▶ Grantee ratings of the clarity of GFC’s communications about its own goals and strategy have significantly increased and are now near the very top of CEP’s dataset. Ratings are similarly positive for the consistency and transparency of these communications.
 - Perhaps relatedly, grantees continue to report a strong understanding of how they fit into GFC’s broader efforts, with ratings in the top ten percent of CEP’s dataset.



“Interactions with GFC staff are consistently professional, respectful, and collaborative, creating a sense of true partnership. Communication is timely, transparent, and responsive, ensuring that we feel informed and supported at every stage. Overall, GFC demonstrates a strong commitment to building trust and empowering partners through effective engagement.”

Transparent, Time-Intensive Grantmaking Processes

Global Fund for Children’s grantmaking processes are now even more clear, relevant and adaptable to grantee needs than in previous years, with ratings in the top quarter of CEP’s dataset across most process measures. At the same time, opportunities remain to streamline processes given GFC’s small median grant size.

- ▶ The median GFC grantee now spends 27 hours on process requirements over the lifetime of their grant, a slight increase since 2021. While this effort is in line with the typical funder in CEP’s dataset, GFC’s small grant sizes lead to a smaller than typical monetary return for the time grantees spend.
 - Grantees serving Asia spend more than double the amount of time on GFC processes than all other grantees, 72 hours at the median, and receive only \$400 for every hour they spend.
- ▶ About 80 percent of GFC grantees report having contact with staff before applying for a grant, a slightly lower proportion than at the average funder. These grantees rate significantly higher across measures related to the selection process and the additional assistance GFC provides.
- ▶ Grantees report a typical amount of pressure to modify their organizational priorities in order to create a grant proposal that was likely to be funded. Importantly, grantees whose operating budgets are most dependent on GFC experience more pressure to modify their priorities.



“One possible improvement would be to simplify some reporting requirements by allowing more flexible formats (such as short narrative updates or visual storytelling) that better reflect the realities of grassroots organizations.”

CEP Recommendations

Based on its grantee feedback, CEP recommends that Global Fund for Children consider the following in order to build on its strengths and address potential opportunities:

- ▶ Celebrate GFC’s stellar impact on grantees’ fields, communities, and organizations, its helpful support beyond the grant, trusting relationships and clear communications, and its adaptable grantmaking processes, particularly in this moment of urgent challenge for many grantees.
 - Given grantee suggestions, continue building offerings of GFC’s assistance beyond the grant, particularly opportunities for grantees to connect with their peers, and capacity-building support that could increase organizational sustainability. Ensure grantee feedback is incorporated in this process.
- ▶ Reflect on the growing proportion of grantees who rely on GFC for most of their operational budget, the proportion of grantees who do not feel their organization could sustain work without GFC funding, and the pressure some of these grantees feel to modify their own organizational priorities in order to receive funding. Seek opportunities to increase organizational sustainability by connecting grantees with other sources of funding.
- ▶ Discuss ways to streamline grantmaking processes and consider offering potential applicants avenues to speak with GFC staff before applying as a way to reduce application time and increase monetary return.

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