

1. Why a donor engagement policy statement?

The Other Foundation is a southern African LGBTI community foundation that advances the equality and freedom of homosexual and bisexual women and men, and transgender and intersex people. It does this through philanthropy development and fundraising, grant making, and movement building.

To achieve the level of financial investment required to achieve the necessary scale and quality of impact that its mission requires, the Foundation recognizes that it must tap into as many individual and institutional, private and public, domestic and overseas, big and small sources of funding at the same time. Donor development and fundraising is a core part of the Foundation's work.

It recognizes that, given the limited availability of donors supporting LGBTI activism, especially domestic sources, it must cultivate new giving *and* work to harvest new donor sources at the same time.

It also recognizes that it is, and will be for the foreseeable future, a donor dependent agency. Being a public, community foundation, that is not necessarily a problem. However, it means that donors are a critically important interest group for the Foundation with whom its relationships, and whose decisions and practices, have a high impact on the continued existence and work of the Foundation. The Foundation's donors can make or break it.

The Foundation recognizes that the global funding landscape and architecture in support of LGBTI freedom and equality is changing, with increased volumes of funding becoming available in bigger grants and for new forms of activism, often through global competitions or highly selective strategic investments. As an intermediary funding agency that intends to raise an increasing quantum of funds to distribute to LGBTI activist groups and for its operational activities in this shifting funding landscape, the Foundation recognizes that it might displace other LGBTI agencies in the region who might equally aspire to attract new funding or funding for new forms of activism. The Foundation must develop a rationale for why and how it will approach such opportunities in a way that best advances the field of LGBTI activism across southern Africa.

The Foundation recognizes that LGBTI activism in southern Africa is a political struggle in which a strong political narrative prevails that the existence of LGBTI people and struggles in the region represents the imposition of a Western culture and way of life driven through overseas funding of misguided proxy agents represented by LGBTI activist organizations in the region. The way in which funding reaches LGBTI organizations in southern Africa is therefore critical to the advancement or regression of LGBTI struggles in southern Africa. Risks related to questions about who decides, whose interests count and whose agenda is being promoted through funding must be mediated through how the Foundation navigates all its donor relations.

The history of North-South relations, especially in relation to Africa's historical and contemporary positioning and future aspirations in the world, as well as current regional and global geopolitics, requires awareness of, and sensitivity to, the power dynamics inherent in the overlapping of a number of social and economic justice concerns at once, if a social justice approach is to be taken as expected of the Other Foundation. The conscious and unconscious assumptions, biases, and expectations involved at the inter-sections of 'race', class, culture, history, and geopolitical positioning – in addition to gender and sexual orientation – must therefore be foregrounded transparently in the Foundation's domestic and international engagement, including its engagement with donors and as a donor.

The complexity that this necessary diversity of donors, types of philanthropic engagement, and effects of donor relations presents, means that the Foundation must establish some coherence in how it thinks about and navigates specific opportunities, interests, and risks in its donor engagement work.

This requires it to have a considered approach to donor engagement that is informed by openly declared values, principles, expectations, and practices.

This policy statement is not a fundraising policy but a policy framework that articulates an approach to donor engagement in general. It declares guiding values and principles, expresses expectations, makes commitments, and frames practices for the Foundation's engagement of all types of donors, recognizing that to fund LGBTI activism in southern Africa is to do political philanthropy work.

2. Application

The Foundation recognizes that as much as it is a philanthropy developer and fundraiser, it is also a donor, albeit as a particular kind of public foundation being a community foundation. The Foundation therefore understands that this policy statement, as much as it expresses values, principles, expectations and commitments about engagement with its own donors, equally applies to itself as a donor. The Foundation takes this policy statement also as to commitment about what the recipients of its funds should expect of it, as a donor itself.

This policy therefore applies to the Foundation itself as a donor, and is declared in an institutional policy statement so that it can inform how its own individual and institutional, private and public, domestic and overseas, small and big donors interact with it, as well as how it will engage with its donors.

3. Values

The Other Foundation is a values-based organization. Some of its core values are respect for the equal dignity of every human person, including social justice, human progress, and freedom.

Institutionally, above all it values being authentic in its dealings with others. The main ways that the Foundation is committed to developing its authenticity is by being accountable through transparent and participatory processes in the various aspects of its work, whether it be philanthropy development, fundraising, grant making, convenings, or research.

These are the core values that will inform its donor engagement approach.

4. Principles

4.1. Institutional integrity: Given its positioning as a non-endowed public foundation that is an intermediary community foundation operating in the overlapping political space between donor and recipient communities of interest and working in a highly contested political struggle, the effectiveness of the Other Foundation's mission rests on its institutional integrity, including the integrity of its governance and operational decision-making systems. In all its donor engagement, the Other Foundation will at all times work to advance and protect its institutional integrity. It will avoid any perception that its institutional integrity has been compromised through donor engagement.

4.2. Shared interests: To advance this agenda, the Other Foundation will seek out donors with which it has overlapping values and interests. The Foundation should at all times be able to explain why it makes any decision and takes up particular kinds of work, based on its declared values and interests so that it does not become a donor-driven agency. While always remaining open to meaningful

dialogue, engagement, and learning with donors, it will guard against donors disproportionately influencing its agenda and priority setting or pushing it into ‘mission drift’.

- 4.3. Mutual value addition: The Other Foundation recognizes that many donors who have a commitment to supporting LGBTI activism in southern Africa, especially (but not exclusively) private individual and institutional donors, are deeply invested personally and politically in advancing the freedom and equality of LGBTI people in southern Africa. The Foundation values this as a powerful resource beyond funding and will do everything that it can to engage such donors in exposure to the operating context, analysis of the context, and strategic thinking together. The Foundation recognizes that its donors might not only give funds but also offer knowledge, expanded networks, and strategic insight. Similarly, the Foundation recognizes that it is not only a potential recipient of money, but also offers a mechanism and an agency through which donors are enabled to give effect to their strategic interests in an efficient way. The Foundation recognizes that it not only receives funding but offers connectivity, reach, and strategic insight to its donors.
- 4.4. Recognition of power: As an activist funder that is an intermediary regional funder in southern Africa, the Other Foundation recognizes its presence and agency as an actor in the field. It is not removed or insulated from its particular context and sets of relationships that influence how things happen and how they turn out. It recognizes its power, limited as it is, in the shifting LGBTI donor landscape globally and in the region, and in influencing activism in the region. The Foundation will not disclaim its power as an actor in the field but will at all times strive to act as one amongst others in a spirit of mutual respect, collaboration, and accountability, equally with other funders and activist agencies. It will encourage other donors to recognize and disclose their influence in the region.
- 4.5. Values-based donor coordination: While donor networks can serve as an important forum to share information, problems, and opportunities in a way that advances strategic learning and good practices, increased coordination in donor networks should not result in a disproportionate concentration of power that disadvantages individuals or groups of potential grantees or current grantees as a result of too much donor harmonization in strategic approaches. The Other Foundation will actively participate in donor networks to advance strategic learning and innovation, participatory grant making practices, coordination of efforts to achieve specific outcomes (such as increased funding for LGBTI activist groups in Africa), and the advancement of African LGBTI-focused philanthropy and movement building – but will guard against increased concentration of harmful power in donor groups. It will actively develop its analysis and voice in this regard and assess its participation in diverse donor networks in these terms.
- 4.6. Confidentiality of information: Donors have privileged access to confidential information about individuals and organizations that request funding from them. In its practice as a donor and in its engagement with donors that it approaches for funding, the Other Foundation will respect the confidentiality of such information. It will protect and act against the disclosure of confidential information to other donors without the consent of the groups who’s about whom information might be requested, and will transparently seek permission from those with whom it engages to disclose any information that is requested of it. It will encourage the same of its donors. It will openly and honestly explain to its grant recipients and others that donors do sometimes share information about grantees, describe how it will strive to always do that in a way that advances LGBTI activism in southern Africa, and regularly ask for feedback from grantees and others about how it has behaved in this regard, and take corrective action to improve its practice recognizing that it might sometimes act inappropriately.
- 4.7. Shared ownership of knowledge outputs: A significant part of the value offered by the work of Other Foundation is knowledge production. It is able to invest in knowledge production as a result of the

investments that donors make in this part of its work. The Foundation will ensure shared ownership of intellectual property between those who produce knowledge and the donor who invests in its production, and will encourage that the intellectual property that is generated through donor investments in knowledge products be made freely available for non-commercial purposes, with due recognition of sources.

5. Expectations

The Foundation has the following expectations of itself as a donor and encourages the same of all donors that it engages with. It will work to give practical effect to these expectations.

- 5.1. Transparency: Partnership between potential and current recipients of funds should be based on genuine dialogue and mutual learning, where there is transparency about specific donor interests, what is expected of funding applicants, how decisions are made, and what informed a decision. Disclosure of information by the donor in a timely and respectful way, with the opportunity for feedback, is therefore expected.
- 5.2. Confidentiality: In its practice as a donor and in its engagement with donors that it approaches for funding, the Other Foundation will expect that the confidentiality of information to which the donor has privileged access will be affirmed and respected. This includes but is not limited to information about the personal health and wellbeing of personnel, failed grant investments, internal grievance and disciplinary procedures that are in process but might not yet have been concluded, fundraising applications that have not been successful, individual remuneration of personnel, and other similar kinds of information.
- 5.3. Engagement: Donors are influential actors in LGBTI activism in southern Africa. As an intermediary community foundation (but not a representative LGBTI platform), the Other Foundation will always prefer to include LGBTI activists in discussion about donor priorities and practices, including its own. Openness to informed participation by LGBTI activists and allies will therefore be encouraged in the Foundation's donor engagements. The Foundation recognizes that it has no direct control over the practices of other donors but will set, measure, and assess its own achievement of targets for participatory practices in the key aspects of its operations.
- 5.4. Learning: The Other Foundation will be open to learning from other donors about strategies, systems, and practices that can make it a more effective and efficient fundraiser and funder. It will encourage the same approach by the donors that it engages with, both as a fellow donor and as a recipient of funds.
- 5.5. Risk tolerance: The struggle for freedom and equality of LGBTI people necessarily requires a high level of responsiveness, tactical agility, and strategic experimentation. The Other Foundation has a high level of tolerance for strategic risk taking in the programmatic areas of work that it supports – and, consequently, an appreciation that failure will be experienced in the work along with success. The Foundation affirms the acceptance of failure as an inevitable part of supporting struggles for LGBTI equality and freedom and encourages its donors to equally be accepting of failure of some investments. However, in taking programmatic risks, the Foundation will always seek to do no harm and will also expect that of its donors. The Foundation will regularly assess the risk profile of its investments.
- 5.6. Availability: The Other Foundation will strive to be as present and available as possible to the groups that it supports, as they might need. The Foundation will ask its donors to be available to engage in discussions as frequently as might be possible for them.

6. Commitments

Correspondingly, the Other Foundation will make the following commitments to the donors with whom it engages and will actively put capacities and mechanisms in place to ensure that it will:

- 6.1. Respect and value all its donors equally: The Other Foundation will respect and value all its donors equally, whether small or big donors, individual or institutional donors, public or private donors, overseas or domestic donors. It will regularly ask all its donors for feedback about its practice in this regard.
- 6.2. Honour declared policies: We will strive to develop a relationship built on trust by honouring our own code of values and practice which refers to being authentic and demonstrating this by being accountable through transparent and participatory processes. The Foundation will also demonstrate how it applies its declared policies and take corrective action if has failed to do that. It's governance and operational team will regularly review its performance against its code of values and practice.
- 6.3. Practice accountability: The Other Foundation will provide accurate and complete information to its donors and participate in open dialogue about the information that it has provided, to give effect to its commitment to accountability. Specifically, it will make every effort to fully comply with the agreed requirements of its donors, both in the management of funds received and in its reporting about that. It will put adequate capacity in place to ensure timely and high quality donor liaison and reporting and will take action to self-correct when this commitment is not met. The Foundation will also put structures and systems in place to ensure its meaningful accountability to the mission for which it exists and to the communities that it exists to support. It will take action to demonstrate to its donors how it does this, through open feedback practices.
- 6.4. Manage funds responsibly: We will invest resources prudently and put in place optimal personnel and systems to manage and account for funds received, in full compliance with the highest standards of financial accounting and the specific requirements for financial accounting that are agreed with donors. It will regularly conduct internal compliance audits to assess its practice in this regard.
- 6.5. Communicate: The Other Foundation will communicate timeously with its donors both in formal reporting processes but also outside of the formal timeframes. It will keep donors informed about progress with the work that it does and about developments in the organization through regular newsletters and other forms of communication. It will disclose problems and failures to its donors, and not only successes.
- 6.6. Engage: The Other Foundation recognizes that there are different levels of interests from donors, which require different levels of engagement. We embrace and accept this reality and will strive to find the correct balance that suits different donors. We will make every effort to participate in donor networks in a purposeful way. We will encourage diversified engagement opportunities, including with trustees and personnel of the Foundation, with the individuals and groups that the Foundation works with, and amongst the Foundation's donors.
- 6.7. Offer high value: The Other Foundation will strive to deliver a high return on investment of funds received from donors by working hard to achieve high quality and high impact outcomes in all the work that it does so that donors of the Foundation are assured that the investments they make through the Foundation have generated the greatest value in advancing equality and freedom for LGBTI people in southern Africa. This will include value for money from both social return on investment and cost efficiency perspectives.