

January 2021

Stronger Roots Program

**Matching Grants
for Crowdfunding Campaigns**

The Stronger Roots Program is aimed at increasing the organizational and network resilience of civil society organizations in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary and embed them in the societies in which they operate. The program is administered by a consortium of Open Society Fund Prague (CZ), Open Society Foundation Bratislava (SK), Glopolis (CZ) and the NIOK Foundation (HU).

Since January 2019, the Stronger Roots Program has been supporting 35 grantees from Slovakia, Czech Republic and Hungary, to strengthen their constituencies. In order to motivate the grantees to implement the new knowledge and approach into the practice, the Stronger Roots Program **is now announcing matching grants for crowdfunding campaigns** organized by its grantees.

What is a crowdfunding campaign: Crowdfunding is a method of raising funds for your project or activity from a large number of people primarily online via social media and crowdfunding platforms. The method demands actively approaching a large pool of individuals, using their networks for greater reach and exposure, presenting a good story why the funds are needed and convincing them to donate.

Do you want to apply? If yes, please read carefully the following guidelines.

Who can apply?

The matching grants are **available to all 35 grantees of the Stronger Roots Program who decide to organize a crowdfunding campaign** aimed at raising funds for their organizations or their specific projects / products or activities. However, organizing the campaign and applying for a matching grant **is not mandatory** under the Stronger Roots Program - you should consider by yourself whether crowdfunding is or is not a tool that fits in your organization's fundraising strategy and if you have necessary capacities. You can definitively apply even if you do not have such a campaign planned in the current Stronger Roots project, however please note that if the crowdfunding campaign is an extra activity compared to your original project plan it should not affect the original activities and goals in any way.

What will you have to do?

If your organization decides to apply, **you will be fully responsible for organizing your own crowdfunding campaign from the beginning till the end.** That means you will have to come up with an idea on the crowdfunding focus, choose a crowdfunding platform or method, set your financial goal and a specific timeframe, a deadline by which the target amount needs to be met. Then you will have to prepare an effective campaign plan, launch the campaign, approach your supporters and communicate with your donors. For financing the campaigns, you will have to use your own organizations' s finance or funds allocated within your existing Stronger Roots grants. The Stronger Roots Program cannot provide you with any more funds for organizing the campaign!

How can your campaign look like?

You can choose a crowdfunding platform or crowdfunding method according to your preference. You can even decide not to use any platform, but organize the crowdfunding campaign on your own website - however, in this case we strongly recommend using a transparent account so that the donations are clearly visible. If you decide so, your campaign can also include online peer-to-peer fundraising. Whichever method you choose, however, the communication campaign is the key to the success of your crowdfunding! Make a thorough communication plan (whom you will address, how and at which moments) and put all your efforts and energy to tell (and repeat) your crowdfunding story to your audience throughout the course of your campaign.

Crowdfunding is also sometimes connected with rewards for the donors, however this is not among our conditions - if you decide to do so, please think carefully whether you have anything meaningful and cost/ work-effective to offer.

Eleven basic tips how to make a successful crowdfunding campaign

- 1 Define the goal of your crowdfunding campaign.
- 2 Choose the target amount.
- 3 Make a thorough communication plan.
- 4 Select a crowdfunding platform.
- 5 Highlight your brand (use logo and your visual).
- 6 Tell a compelling story.
- 7 Use photos and video for emotional impact.
- 8 Offer a variety of giving levels (amounts).
- 9 Get creative with your promotion.
- 10 Do intense campaigning.
- 11 Do e-mail follow-up with your donors.

Please find more detailed explanations and other resources here: <https://blog.techsoup.org/posts/8-tips-on-how-to-run-a-successful-crowdfunding-campaign>

How do the matching grants work and how much will I get?

When you are preparing your campaign, you have to set up (and publicly announce) the target amount (that is the amount of funds you want to raise in your campaign) and the deadline by which you need to raise it. If you are successful, the Stronger Roots Program may provide you with a matching grant amounting to your target amount (up to the maximum limit of 5000 Euro).

However, please choose your target amount carefully, because the matching funds depend on whether you reach the target amount of your campaign or not according to this scheme:

How much you raise in your campaign from your supporters	How much you will get from the Stronger Roots Program	How much you will have for funding the project/activity etc. you state as your crowdfunding focus
You reach at least 90 % of your target amount or more	You will receive the same sum as you raised (up to the maximum limit of 5000 Euro)	You will have twice your raised amount
You reach less than 90 % of your target amount	You will not receive any matching fund	You will have what you raise
Concrete examples if your target amount is 5000 Euro:		
You raise 4500 Euro (90 % of the target amount)	You will receive a 4500 Euro matching grant	You will have 9000 Euro in total
You raise 3000 Euro (60 % of the target amount)	You will not receive any matching grant	You will have 3000 Euro in total

The maximum amount of a matching grant in all cases is set on 5000 EUR. And the matching grants must be used for the same purpose as stated in your crowdfunding campaign!

Please also note that the crowdfunding platforms may have their own financial guidelines - for example, some may provide you with your raised funds only in case you reach your target amount fully (if you do not reach it, they return all the donations back to the donors). In case you choose such a platform and you do not reach the target amount (that means you will not receive any funds from your supporters), we cannot provide you with any matching grant!

Generally, we recommend that you put all your efforts and contacts into reaching your target amount – if our budget allows it, we will be happy to provide those who reach 100 % of their target amount not only with the matching grant according to the above depicted scheme, but also with a special bonus.

How can you communicate the matching grant in your campaign?

Feel free to say in your campaign that if your crowdfunding campaign is successful and you reach your target amount, the OSF Prague / OSF Bratislava will double the funds from the Stronger Roots Program.

Please choose carefully your target amount!

- Your crowdfunding target needs to be a balance between **what you need to raise** to make your idea happen and **what you think you can raise** from your crowd.
- Don't forget that on many crowdfunding platforms, fees will be deducted from your raised amount.
- If you opt for having rewards for donors, calculate the amount of money you need to fulfil your rewards too.
- Consult the campaign goal, the target amount and the means of approaching supporters with your mentor, consultants or the crowdfunding platform operators.
- **Be bold, but realistic!** Raising 5000 EUR in a crowdfunding campaign is not as easy as it may seem, especially if you have not had previous experience with crowdfunding or online fundraising. Remember also that you can always raise more and stretch your target to a bigger number once you hit 100 %.

We advise you to set rather lesser amounts which are realistic to achieve instead of longing for a full 5000 EUR just because it is offered.

How can you apply?

The application process has several phases. First, you will be asked to submit a brief campaign plan, then you will receive a chance to discuss it with experienced consultants and peers from other organizations in the Stronger Roots Program and at the end, you will submit the final campaign plan which will both lead you in managing your campaign, and help the Stronger Roots Program administrators to monitor it.

Campaign plan form you need to complete is attached.

Timeline of actions:

*Here is the general timeline for the matching grants and crowdfunding campaigns. However, if any of the grantees have good reasons to organize the campaign earlier (for example in the spring of 2021), **we may be flexible and allow exceptions** – if this is your case, please contact your Stronger Roots contact person immediately.*

March 1, 2021

Please submit the completed form to your country coordinator (please see below) by e-mail (if you plan your campaign in spring 2020 already, please contact us as soon as possible).

March - May 2021

After submitting the campaign plan, all applicants will be asked to further discuss and polish their campaign plans through peer-learning and professional consultancy provided by the Stronger Roots Program.

June 16, 2021

Please submit a final campaign plan.

July 2021 – January 2022

This is the period when your campaigns will be on. All campaigns must end before January 31, 2022 (that means, supporters can donate only before this date).

After the end of your campaign

You will be provided with the matching grant by OSF Prague / OSF Bratislava based on a contract. The funds are to be used exclusively for your crowdfunding goal.

Contact Persons

Czech Republic: Michael Adamec michael.adamec@osf.cz

Hungary: Renáta Scheili rscheili@niok.hu

Slovakia: Ondrej Škvarenina ondrej.skvarenina@osf.sk

Have you reached your target amount?

Congratulations! Stronger Roots Program will provide you with the matching grant and you can go ahead with financing your campaign goal.

But do not forget that obtaining funds is just one side of crowdfunding. Look how many people supported your campaign and who they are. You have their e-mails and you know they are interested in your activities so do not miss the opportunity and keep in touch with them. With a bit of care during some time, they may be turned into your regular donors. Good luck!

Stronger Roots for Civil Society 2020

www.osf.cz

www.niok.hu

www.osf.sk

www.glopolis.org