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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: FINDINGS FROM THE 2015 GRANTEE SURVEY

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### INTRODUCTION

In Spring 2015, Global Greengrants Fund conducted a global survey of grantees for the first time. 124 grant recipients from 41 countries responded out of 405 surveyed, for a margin of error of  $\pm 7.9\%$ . Specifically, we wanted to understand how our small grants program helps grantees:

- Connect to wider movements for social change.
- Grow and improve their communities' access to resources over time.
- Influence key actors and decision-making spaces that affect their lives.

### RESULTS

The large majority of grants are going to grassroots groups with small budgets. Over one-third of grants support indigenous-related work or organizations. By 2013, 30% of surveyed grant were to women-led or -focused activities. Global Greengrants was the first funder for 38% of surveyed grantees.

Over half (59%) of grantees described highly impressive wins over the history of their group, including filing environmental complaints that stalled an industrial gold mine, and a campaign to end lead and mercury poisoning, which resulted in a new pollution law draft.

Three major challenges grantees reported are in finding funds for grassroots projects, the overwhelming nature of struggles and power differentials, and the narrowing civil society space.

The need for recurrent funding was a dominant and recurring theme. Respondents highlighted the lack of other available funding sources, and communicated strongly that one year was not enough time for a new group to gain a foothold. Other grantees asked for more post-grant contact, and suggested advisors help link groups to other sources of funding.

## *Highlights*

The large majority of grants (59%) go to grassroots groups with relatively small budgets (<\$13,000 per year). Over one-third of grants go to indigenous-related work or organizations. GGF is the first funder for 38% of grantees.

More than 91% of respondents rated the experience of working with the advisor before applying for a grant, ease of applying, and promptness of funds as “good” or “very good.”

The large majority of written feedback described the grant process with words like “simple,” “easy,” “transparent,” and “quick.” Some grantees wanted more information on the grant approval timeline and more contact with the advisor after the grant.

66% of all respondents received advice or mentorship from advisors that went beyond grants.

84% of respondents answered that the grant was either very or somewhat helpful in furthering the leadership capacity of the organization.

40% of surveyed groups are growing.

42% of respondents indicated gender is “essential” to their work.

60% of grantees said that their primary goal was to try to influence decision-makers. 46% of those who answered the question said they had been successful “to a large extent,” and 47% said “to a small extent.”

79% reported that they belonged to formal networks. Grantees in regular contact with three or more groups (71% of respondents) were statistically more likely to claim success in influencing decision-makers or policies.

Over the past year, 41% of respondents said they had increased access to media; 46% said their access had stayed the same.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The survey findings provide useful insights for future discussion:

Global Greengrants’ overall grant process is highly prized by recipients, especially the timeliness and flexibility of grants. Staff could work to reduce the few grant delays and provide grantees with a clear timeline for receiving funds.

Additional advisor services, such as training and support, are valuable, and grantees would like more avenues for contact after grants are awarded.

Advisors could use grantee feedback to formulate approaches to repeat grants, graduated support, linking to other sources of funding, and other possible ways to support emerging groups.

Grantees attempt to influence local, regional, national, and sometimes international actors and processes. Working across these nested levels creates many demands.

With repeat surveys, GGF will have more information about the trajectory and growth of organizations over time, especially in cases when we are first funder. When is growth or stability beneficial? Do groups hibernate between major struggles?

Repeat surveys especially first-funded organizations will help us monitor groups' durability. Global Greengrants will be able to compare for all grantees whether and how the number and mix of funding sources and "connectedness" changes over time, how organizations prioritize gender, and how repeat grantees fare in relation to one-time grantees.

This first global survey of grantees is an important tool for reflecting on and making changes to our grantmaking process. There will be a series of surveys, interviewing the same grantees every two years. It is our hope that these surveys will continue to be a vital part of learning for the organization as a whole.