

Global Fund for Women Case Study

“Growing the Global Fund for Women”

The Global Fund for Women is an international network of women and men committed to a world of equality and social justice. The Global Fund advocates for and defends women’s human rights by making grants to support women’s groups around the world.

Founded in 1987, the Global Fund for Women has awarded over \$54,000,000 to 3,200 women’s organizations in more than 160 countries. These grants work to address issues including gender-based violence, economic justice, health and reproductive rights, political participation, and access to education.

Just seven years ago, in 1999, the Global Fund for Women began to explore direct response fundraising as a potential tool to diversify its funding base. The Global Fund needed to generate significant net revenue to underwrite its life-changing work.

In 2001, armed with the results of an initial new-donor acquisition campaign and favorable response from current individual donors, the Global Fund approached Mal Warwick Associates to collaborate in launching a long-term donor development program.

When we began working with the Global Fund for Women, its direct mail program was in its infancy. A small group of long-time donors contributed generous gifts each year in response to a limited number of appeals.

FOCUS ON RECRUITMENT AND RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING

Our partnership with the Global Fund for Women focused on recruiting new donors and building stronger relationships with existing donors. However, the program had to be respectful of Global Fund’s unique view of fundraising. Believing that each person gives what she can afford, the Global Fund for Women refused to designate or recognize donors by gift amounts. The program we developed had to adhere to this philosophy.

The first step was to build the infra-structure to handle an active donor program. We assisted in creating a comprehensive donor acknowledgment program and an ongoing donor communication system.

Next we turned our focus to growing the base of supporters. Starting early in 2002, Mal Warwick Associates launched an ongoing donor recruitment program. By creating a new acquisition package, exploring new lists and markets, and systematically testing package components, we were able to increase the acquisition volume to a half-million pieces annually.

EXPANDED GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

But new-donor recruitment was just a part of the overall development plan. It ran in collaboration with a fully-developed resolicitation and cultivation program, gradually built over time. In stages, Mal Warwick Associates and the Global Fund for Women:

- Launched an annual renewal program to encourage donors to participate in a coordinated yearly fundraising drive;
- Developed a regular schedule of special appeal mailings to inform donors of important programmatic issues and challenges and offer opportunities to support the Global Fund's efforts financially; and
- Established a monthly sustainer program, the *Corazón Network*, to allow a handful of committed donors to contribute preauthorized monthly gifts.

The Global Fund's fundraising philosophy prohibited the standard "high-dollar giving club" that is a mainstay of many of the development programs Mal Warwick Associates has helped its clients to build. Instead, we created *Inspiration Partners*, a group of donors who agree to commit to significant increases in their annual giving. Inspiration Partners have a year to fulfill that pledge.

Ongoing communication and correspondence with the donors was an important part of the over all strategy to build strong donor relationships. Through its annual report, special reports, and other non-solicitation correspondence, the Global Fund was able to engage and educate donors about their work and current events.

Planned giving promotion was an added component of the maturing program. The Anne Firth Murray Circle, named for the Global Fund's founding president, is made up of donors that have notified the organization that they've made provisions in their estate plans for the Global Fund.

A GROWING DONOR BASE

What are the results of the growth and development of the direct response program in the last five years?

New-donor recruitment efforts have generated close to 13,000 new donors to the Global Fund. The number of active donors has increased four-fold, from just 2,500 in 2001 to almost 10,000 in 2006. Overall revenue from the direct mail program has increased by at least 20% each year since 2002.

The Corazón Network monthly sustainer program generates over \$80,000 each year from under 200 donors. And Inspiration Partners represent a growing pool of donors that are continually increasing their annual pledges and contributing a large amount of revenue each year.

The annual renewal program has become a cornerstone of the program, generating 30% of the annual direct response revenue.

In 2003, the Global Fund for Women launched the Investing in Women Campaign to fund the organization's long-term commitment to investing in grassroots women's organizations around the world. Individual donors played a large role in creating that \$20 million endowment.

GRANTS UP 97% IN 5 YEARS

The Development Department of the Global Fund for Women has expanded as have the numbers of Corazón Network members, Inspiration Partners, and Anne Firth Murray Circle members who are in regular contact with the organization. This growing pool of engaged donors are participating in teleconferences with the President, trips to visit grantee groups, and pledging their financial resources to ensure that the Global Fund for Women remains strong for years to come.

But, more importantly, the Global Fund for Women has grown significantly. Annual grant-making has nearly doubled in five years—from \$4 million in 2001 to \$7.8 million in grants last year.

Mal Warwick Associates is honored to work with this dynamic organization that is truly making a difference in the lives of women and girls around the world.