



## EFC member survey on response to the coronavirus pandemic Preliminary findings

23 March 2020

### About this survey

The EFC surveyed its members from 12-20 March to find out what measures they are taking, internally and in their programmatic and funding activities, in response to the coronavirus pandemic. The purpose of the survey is to gain an overview of what our members are doing and to identify possible points of collaboration and synergy. Below are the survey questions and preliminary findings from the 78 responses from members and affiliates that were received.

(Some members indicated that they are participating in other surveys that are not specifically geared toward philanthropic organisations, and are therefore unable to reply at this time.)

### Detailed information on EFC members' response – *For EFC Members and Affiliates only*

Upon request we can provide EFC Members and Affiliates with more details on how individual organisations within the EFC membership is responding to the crisis, including information on:

- Members' appetite for connecting with other organisations for information sharing and/or joint action
- Actions and initiatives launched in response to the crisis
- Actions and initiatives planned in the near future

Please use the contact details below to request this members-only information.

### Contact

For more information, to give feedback, or to [take the survey](#), please contact:  
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## Survey questions and initial findings

### 1. In light of the fast-evolving developments of coronavirus (COVID-19) is your organisation taking internal measures to protect staff, visitors etc.? (e.g. travel restrictions, smart-working, teleworking, online meetings, etc.)

General observations: All respondents have been impacted in the way they work internally. Following are further specific findings regarding how the pandemic has affected internal working policies:

- 70% of respondents said they were using “smart-working” methods
- Many members own buildings with public spaces in them, such as museums and libraries. These public spaces have generally been closed. Several members have closed their offices altogether.
- Some members have provided hygiene advice to their staff (e.g. to wash hands, keep physical distance), and have provided sanitary products to staff, while many have asked staff to work from home.
- While members indicated that they have postponed or cancelled in-person meetings and workshops, in general they are using online tools to carry on with their calls and meetings, including board meetings and conferences.

### 2. In light of the critical situation, is there any programme/initiative you are running or supporting that will be harder to implement? And if yes, why? Are there specific challenges you are expecting to face? (e.g. dealing with potential losses of grantees; impossibility to implement an initiative as it consists of gatherings/peer-learnings; etc.)

General observations: 79% of respondents said “yes”, some of their programmes will be harder to implement. Members are facing challenges in evaluating which if any activities to suspend, and in finding ways to modify or restructure programmes to accommodate the current situation. Members are also concerned about how the situation will impact their grantees.

#### *Challenges for philanthropic organisations*

- Suspension of some programmes and activities, especially international gatherings, other face-to-face meetings, activities that require public participation, art and culture activities (e.g. exhibitions, residence programmes, exchanges) and educational programmes (particularly those taking place in schools)
- The need to consider the relevancy of some programmes (for instance educational programmes for elderly and youth) and to restructure programmes  
*“Yes, some programmes don't make sense in the context: elderly people, education... the question is: Do we put those programmes on hold for the coming months, or do we modify the content of these programmes to the Covid19 context following its consequences on the elderly people, youth, education?” – EFC member response*
- Suspension of grantee visits, convening and capacity-building activities
- Concern over a shift in political commitments (e.g. regarding the environment)  
*“I worry about the 'superyear' for the environment which is based on a series of big COPs this year that are likely to be cancelled or postponed. Hard to see what the back-up plan could be.” – EFC member response*

#### *Challenges for grantees*

- Delays in implementing planned activities

- Those that implement commercial activities (not only sales but also paid services such as day-care) will be impacted financially
- Non-profits will have cash flow problems
- The funding priority will be shifted to meet emergency needs of communities at risk rather than supporting non-profits' financial sustainability

*“We had planned grantee convenings in three locations this year. These have been postponed but might be shifted into virtual webinars. We fear that the company will also want to focus on immediate response funding rather than maintaining a view to the high needs arising from the sector after the peak crisis.” – EFC member response*

**3. Given your specific context, work and experience, what do you consider that your foundation can bring to respond to this situation? (e.g. a specific approach, perspective, asset, inspirational ideas, etc.)**

General observations: 32 respondents answered this question. Several responses went beyond financial support and highlighted the many facets of philanthropic support, including expertise and information sharing, among others.

- Most said they first give support to their grantees (financial, technical, information) and then look for direct ways to help with the current situation at the local/community level through interventions such as providing financial support; putting out calls for volunteers and funding from the public; and sharing information.
- Several of respondents indicated that they were unsure of what specific actions their foundation could bring.
- A few were interested in finding a collaborative way to fund and/or exchanging ideas, information and good practices.
- Some respondents were looking for longer-term opportunities/perspectives according to their respective fields of activities. Examples from respondents include monitoring and sharing information about best ways for communities to deal with shocks; sharing their experience in the field of crisis management; identifying opportunities created by the current economic crisis for systemic change at global level; contributing to the field of research in line with these issues; and providing official institutions with technical expertise.

**4. Are you supporting any organisation/individual in response or have you launched new initiatives? (e.g. researchers/research institutes, psychological support, economic support, collaboration with local/national governments, etc.)**

General observations: Respondents indicated that they are actively providing new support in response to the crisis, including launching new initiatives\*; are making adjustments to existing programmes; and are enhancing their collaboration with various stakeholders.

The responses can be regrouped under the following categories:

- Some funders have launched emergency grants/funds for the following types of beneficiary:
  - Research (institutes, research teams)
  - Hospitals (to buy materials)
  - Local communities (for social, health and economic urgencies)
  - Specific organisations (e.g. support to NGOs, social businesses)

- Specific organisations working in the emergency field (Red Cross, WHO Digital Health, etc.)
- Specific groups (e.g. elderly, artists)
- Some funders have made changes/are re-considering (in some cases through consultations with grantees) existing programmes/grants (e.g. cancelled large events, extended grants deadlines, more flexibility to partners and grantees, possibility to use the grants for salaries and admin costs despite the suspension of the planned activities, considering diverting resources from other programmes etc.)
- Some funders have started or enhanced existing collaborations:
  - With local authorities
  - With national governments (e.g. Health, Culture)
  - With other funders (e.g. UK Funder Covid-19 statement)
  - Through joint funds (e.g. COVID-19 Response Fund by WHO and UN)
  - Through philanthropic channels (e.g. Chinese philanthropy)
- One funder has strengthened its commitment to using data for social good (Fondazione CRT has committed to mapping the crisis and has promoted an international call for action aimed at increasing the availability and use of data at the service of the current global emergency)
- One corporate funder has mentioned that from its group a Risk Management Team was set up with internal specialists that are permanently in contact with local and national authorities

#### 5. Are you thinking about or already planning to implement something in the near future?

General observations: Some members are currently in consultation with their grantees/partners to assess what the most urgent needs are. Others indicated that new actions are under consideration at their organisations, and one respondent mentioned that they will look for professional help in order to be guided in these decisions. Of the 78 responding organisations, 22 indicated that they have not launched any new initiatives nor are they planning to do so.

The actions planned or under consideration fall mostly under the categories identified in the previous responses and are related to:

- Building internal capacity to adapt to the new way of working (including communicating efficiently from different locations)
- Converting knowledge gatherings into virtual gatherings
- Launching of emergency funding for existing grantees (including for core operations)
- Potential launching of new initiatives to support research, local businesses, and specific groups (e.g. elderly, youth, free-lancers)
- Initiating potential joint actions at national level (e.g. ACRI)

#### Further analysis

Building on these preliminary findings, the EFC will further analyse this data set to find correlations among the responses; identify how geographical contexts may be affecting the response of philanthropic organisations; surface trends in the data; and see how the findings can feed into the EFC's peer-learning activities.

The findings will be updated each Wednesday to incorporate new responses that come in, and depending on the results, further surveys may be carried out. If you would like to contribute new or updated information, please contact Lucia Patuzzi, Knowledge Hub Coordinator, at [lpatuzzi@efc.be](mailto:lpatuzzi@efc.be).