ASSIGNMENT 1:

GRANTS MANAGEMENT:

QUESTION 1: Discuss four motivations that make grant makers/donors to enter into grant making endeavors:

Donors usually fund projects that are in their interests with objectives/goals aligned to their missions and visions. Some of the motivations that make donors to enter into grant agreements are discussed below;

- ✓ The objectives/goals of the applicants. A donor will only fund a project if the objectives of the applicant is aligned to the donors. Only those applications with such objectives will be selected to ensure that that the donor's objectives are achieved. Therefore when considering to write a grant proposal ensure that the objectives are SMART, they should Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant to the mission of the donor, and time bound.

- ✓ The creative and innovative strategies in addressing the existing problem/need should be demonstrated. The applicant needs to think out of the box and come up with innovations that will lead to achievement of objectives, and yet cost effective.

- ✓ Capacity to implement. The applicant must demonstrate that they have the capacity to implement the project through the existing resources in terms of staff expertise, infrastructure, matching funds to ensure that the project will achieve the set objectives. Strong partnerships also demonstrate capacity of the grant applicant.

- ✓ The evaluation plan is key in selection of a grant proposal. The applicant should clearly state how the project would be evaluated with clear objectives and measurable results. Evaluation is either done at the end of the project or continuous, the latter is preferred since it gives room for corrective measures. Continuous monitoring during implementation is a strength to a grant proposal.

- ✓ A grant application will only be funded if the applicant can justify the budget attached to the grant. A budget is justified by the objectives, results, activities, and inputs to be used in implementation, ensuring that the expenses correspond to the planned activities.

- ✓ A grant applicant with an adequate and clear sustainability plan will win the minds of a donor. A donor will be willing to fund a project, if is sure that the project can still continue even after the financial support ends. There should be continuity plan demonstrated in terms of existing resources, and resources to be generated during implementation to sustain the project.

QUESTION 2: What are the components of a winning proposal? Explain four.

Because of the high competition for funds, if you take a decision to participate in writing a grant proposal, ensure that it captivates the eyes of the person evaluating it in order to win the grant. Below are some of the components attributed to a winning proposal;

- ✓ Statement of the problem or need that addresses the funder's priority. Before writing a grant proposal, research intensively on the objectives of the grant you are interested in applying so that your objectives are well aligned with the funders objectives. You need to know the mission and vision of the funders and ensure your objectives fit in well. For example if the funders of the grant are interested in improving livelihood of youths in Uganda, then your statement of the problem would be "Improvement of livelihood among teenage mothers in Nakaseke district through training in business enterprises"

- ✓ Have creative and innovative strategies for addressing the problem. Have feasible goals and objectives to address the existing problem. Strategies for the above project would be to have hands on training in business enterprises, and providing start up kits to the beneficiaries to start their own businesses.

- ✓ Have measurable objectives. In this case the objectives of the project would be to train 1000 teenage mothers in Nakaseke district by December 2020. And provide start up kits to 50% of the trained beneficiaries by March 2021.

- ✓ Describe a sound evaluation plan. Demonstrate methods of obtaining data through primary and secondary sources. And also be able to collect data during implementation of the project for analysis to guide whether the project is on track. You could develop a performance indicator tracking tool and feed it with data to keep track of the results of implementation.

Tabitha Nandera – Grants Management Training Assignment 1

QUESTION 3: Giving examples explain four challenges your organization faces in Grant Management:

Grant management is quite a complex process that requires team work by both the technical and financial expertise to ensure achievement of the overall objectives. In my organization the technical and finance team work together through the entire process at the point of selection, implementation and reporting. We however experience the following challenges below:

✓ Delays in project start up seems to be a syndrome for most grantees. During the proposal development, grantees have high anticipations and plan for many activities in the first quarter. However, when implementation begins, they realize they cannot do much apart from the inception meetings to roll out the project to the state holders and a few initial activities. These leads to delays in reporting since they realize they have done very little and they cannot report, and eventually No-cost extensions request. We started supporting grantees at proposal development to plan for fewer activities in the first quarter since very little can be achieved when the project is beginning.

✓ Inadequate and untimely submission of reports. Our Grantees are obliged to report quarterly, however sometimes there are delays in submitting both the technical and financial reports due to delayed implementation. Sometimes the reports are not complete especially the financial reports, the mandated documents are not provide at the time of reporting. The grantee only send the soft copy of the report and assumes the process is done, and yet the financial report should be accompanied by the expense file of accountabilities, cash book/extract of expenses, bank statements & reconciliations statements. Usually these documents are not provide in time hence leading to delays in approving reports. We keep on reminding the grantee on the completeness of the reports, and also provide a checklist for the required documents for quarterly reports. Some processes during implementation are not well documented, especially the finance documents. An example is when a grantee is using a consultant to implement a particular activity, they don't document how the consultant was procured, and in some cases, the reports by the consultants are not documented, rendering the reports inadequate. We undertake quarterly monitoring visits to support the grantee to have complete documents to support the quarterly reports.

✓ Communication with grantees is sometimes difficult, we use emails and verbal by phone. However sometimes the grantees never value the communication and they never respond or address the issue at hand and never send this message the responsible personnel. We had a dialogue and we agreed to have focal communication personnel who would receive all communications and channel them to the responsible personnel for actions to be taken.

✓ Continuous budget re-allocations during project implementation. This problem is persistent as most grantees don't plan and budget well during proposal writing and when implementation begins, they realize they under budgeted for some activities, and for any budget variation beyond 50% of that activity budget or variations across the results, they are required to seek approval with justifications on the variations. This wastes a lot of time while reviewing the documents for approval. Our grantee agreement gives an allowance of 50% budget variation for activities in the same result area and compensations as well in the same result area.

QUESTION 4: Identify and explain any four features or characteristics of a Project:

✓ Objectives. The objectives are stated in the mission and vision of the project. During development of a project, there are needs that the project needs to address that form the objectives of the project. These objectives are summarized in the mission and vision of the project

✓ Guideline documents for project implementation. The manuals and guidelines that guide the implementation of the project are mandatory. Usually these manuals are in form of Human Resource, Finance, Administration, Procurement guidelines.

✓ Internal controls. These are processes and procedures that are put in place to ensure the integrity of financial and accounting information, promote accountability and prevent fraud., internal controls also improve operational efficiency by improving the accuracy and timeliness of financial reporting

✓ Reporting structures and responsibility lines through the project organogram. There should be clear lines of reporting and responsibility for all project staff to ensure accountability during implementation

QUESTION 5: Discuss the five components of a good monitoring and evaluation plan:

Every project should have a monitoring and evaluation plan to track the achievements of the objectives. A good monitoring and evaluation plan should the following components;

- ✓ Goals/Objectives of the project after implementation. These should be clear and specific, and aligned to the objectives of the donor. For example if the project is to improve the livelihood of teenage mothers within 1 year of intervention, the numbers should clearly be stated, the geographical location and the timeline of achieving this objective, for example 1000 teenage mothers in Nakaseke district trained within a period of 1 year.

- ✓ Criteria to be used to measure the success. Using the above scenario of 1000 teenagers trained, we would use the numbers that graduated, those who got the startup kits and possibly self-employed using the startup kits given.

- ✓ Data collection methods and analysis. Clearly determine who will be responsible for collecting the data, and analyzing it to keep track of the achievements of the project. Monitoring and evaluation expertise has become a useful resource in most projects to help keep track of the results of the project.

- ✓ Clear role of documentation and evaluation in supporting program improvement and determining effectiveness, along with monitoring efforts.

- ✓ Results expected at the stated time. Describe the results you expect to achieve by the end of the project. Using our example if the project is to improve the livelihood of teenage mothers, the results would be 1000 teenage mothers trained with practical business skills within a period of 1 year, and 50% given start up kits. So at the end of 1 year, can we trace the 1000 teenage mothers that were trained, and how many were given the startup kits