

FundWell

A Swift Summary of Wellbeing Stuff for Funders

October's edition of FundWell is curated by [Risk Pool Fund](#)

Hello Changemakers,

Delivering development and humanitarian programs is no easy feat, particularly for organizations working in fragile, conflict-affected regions or areas facing the growing impacts of climate change. Many also contend with unpredictable financial or policy shifts that complicate their operations. In these volatile environments, obstacles that delay or derail projects are common, yet there is no standardized approach for organizations or funders to predict, mitigate, or address these challenges efficiently. Although the sector heavily relies on grant funding, securing timely support to overcome obstacles remains a persistent struggle for many.

Recent research conducted on behalf of the Risk Pool Fund sheds light on a critical issue: the disconnect between funders and implementing partners regarding the real challenges faced in the field. Local NGOs, in particular, encounter more frequent and severe obstacles compared to their international counterparts, often with fewer resources to manage them. While risk management strategies tend to focus on security or financial concerns, funders and implementers alike identify bureaucratic delays as the most common roadblock—yet current tools fail to address this.

In response to these gaps, the Risk Pool Fund (RPF) offers an innovative solution. Recognizing that even with careful planning, unexpected challenges can arise, the RPF provides financial support of up to \$50,000 for implementers to tackle unforeseen obstacles. Since its inception, the fund has helped safeguard over \$90 million in project investments, demonstrating the impact of a flexible, responsive approach to risk management. With 97% of funded projects reporting successful outcomes, the RPF is proving to be a game-changer for organizations navigating the complexities of development and humanitarian work.

In this edition of the Fundwell newsletter, we delve deeper into these challenges and highlight actionable insights for both funders and implementers.



Photo Description: Young school students in Zambia listening intently to the teacher
Photo Credit: Healthy Learners

FundWell Essentials

- Delve into the research on [Navigating Program Risks and Obstacles in International Development and Humanitarian Response](#), revealing how implementing partners and funders perceive, assess, and mitigate challenges in global development and humanitarian efforts.
- Explore the [Risk Pool Fund Model Evaluation 2018-2023](#), an independent assessment that identifies key learning opportunities for adapting and improving the RPF's operations, while offering insights into the impact of its approach over the past five years.
- Read the summary of [Calling Out and Responding to Risk – a Frank Discussion](#), a panel held at The Marmalade Festival in Oxford, April 2024. The Risk Pool Fund convened implementers and funders to discuss obstacles in the field and explore strategies for mitigating them, focusing on how collaboration and innovative solutions can better prevent and resolve critical challenges in program implementation.

Talking Points: pick one and start a conversation!

- What are the barriers to transparency between funders and implementers and what can we do to remove them?
- How do I as a funder navigate the intrinsic power dynamic that reduces the psychological safety of my partners and inhibits open communication?
- As an implementer how can I make my case for support for the unpredictable and drive my funders away from passing responsibility to mitigate risk entirely to the implementers.

Words on Wellbeing

“Risk isn’t the chance of a major case of fraud occurring in a humanitarian crisis. It is the chance that a major fraud event will disrupt or affect an organization’s objectives by, for example, resulting in the organization shutting down critical life-saving interventions for people in need.”

“There is a need to cultivate mechanisms of open communication between funders and partners to discuss obstacles.”

“You know no matter how hard someone who is not proximal to the problem tries to understand, they can never really truly understand because context is so important, it is not written, and is constantly changing.”

Quotes from Risk Pool Fund's research

How does your funding organisation define wellbeing? Does it support wellbeing for its stakeholders? [Reflect and share here, in the Funders + Wellbeing Survey.](#)

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