

1. Introduction to Narrow the Gap Community Fund & Annual Community Event

b. Rationale (Purpose)

In Vietnam there is a prevailing tendency to invest in projects that deliver early results or measurable outputs, with little focus on long-term outcomes. Meanwhile, the changes that are needed to protect the environment, to promote social justice and to improve education and healthcare systems demands a multi-stakeholder approach that incorporates the voices of all affected populations. At the local level, it requires that local people are engaged in solving local challenges, not only at the implementation stage but, more importantly, at the design and evaluation stages.

Since 2009, LIN Center for Community Development has brought together residents, companies and not-for-profit organizations with a shared vision: strengthen the communities in which we live and work by ensuring that all people have access to opportunities. One of the unique ways in which LIN has brought people together is by managing a Community Fund¹ and organizing a Community Event to address a common concern.

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY FUND?

Community Funds are the most identifiable form of structured community philanthropy. Most Community Funds share the following basic characteristics:

- They raise money in their communities and build a permanent resource to create vital communities by encouraging and supporting the local nonprofit infrastructure;
- They have a board of local citizens who are responsible for maintaining the organization, and for identifying and funding community priorities;
- They focus on a defined geographic region and serve the needs of all the citizens in their region, regardless of race, religion or ethnic origin;
- They are non-political; and
- They operate in an open and accessible manner that is designed to build trust, which they do by reporting back to the community on a regular basis.

Community Funds play an important role in teaching and promoting philanthropy, acting as an intermediary organization, convening local stakeholders to focus on shared challenges, promote community development, increasing the accountability and operating standards of NPOs and focusing local resources to address changing local needs.

c. Approach

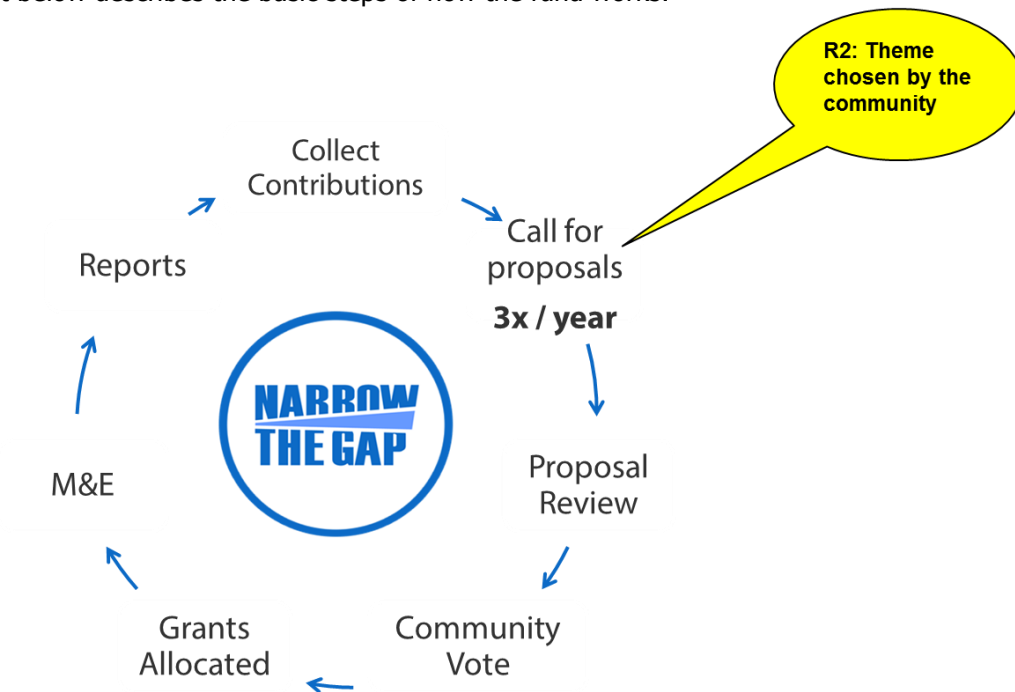
LIN's Narrow the Gap Community Fund pools resources from various sources and engages community members in the process of creating a evaluating proposals, determining which projects receive funding and overseeing how those funds are spent. Only local, Not-for-Profit Organizations (NPOs) are eligible to receive funds from *Narrow the Gap* and only local residents are permitted to decide how Narrow the Gap funds will be allocated. The process offers unique benefits to NPOs and Donors.

¹ To learn more about “What is a community foundations?”, please visit the following webpage:
<http://www.mott.org/FundingInterests/Issues/Community%20Foundations>

The Community Fund, as a grantmaker, provides NPOs with a level of support that is largely missing in Vietnam, by: (1) investing in the capacity of NPOs - through access to technical assistance and resources in financial, technical and professional development; (2) setting clear eligibility criteria, reporting guidelines, and offers free consultations to prospective applicants; (3) building networks among NPOs, volunteers, donors and other stakeholders sharing an interest in a particular cause; and (4) the Fund stays connected to its grantees and proactively shares project milestones and challenges with the broader support network. These benefits are designed to help build the capacity of NPOs while ensuring the success of our grantees' projects.

At the same time, the Narrow the Gap Community Fund benefits local citizens, who typically struggle with a lack of (or poor quality) information, connection and perhaps limited philanthropy experience to make the most effective giving decisions. For individuals and organizations who contribute to the fund, either as a donor, volunteer or in-kind service provider, the Fund offers: (1) Good governance; (2) Effective management and reporting on all income and expenditures; (3) Connections with a community of people with shared interests; (4) Experienced grant making with deep HCMC expertise; and (5) multiple levels and options for contributing beyond a sole investment of funds.

The chart below describes the basic steps of how the fund works:



STEP 1: Throughout the year, we collect donations from individuals/organizations interested to contribute to the Community Fund. For Round 2 only, we set a specific fundraising target (e.g., VND 300 million) and work to raise that amount before the end of August.

STEP 2: LIN invites NPOs to submit project proposals, by disseminating a call for proposals to all NPOs in our network. At the same time, LIN offers technical assistance and trainings to prospective

grant applicants, which is designed to help them strengthen their proposals (e.g. LIN offers workshops on grant writing, communications, monitoring and evaluation, reporting and budgeting and/or we help to match applicants and grantees with skilled volunteers).

STEP 3: Community members and/or an expert panel form a group called Grant Allocation Committee (GAC) to review proposals and recommend projects to receive funding. In round 1&3, the GAC members review the proposals then decide which projects will be funded. In round 2, the GAC members

STEP 4: Community members come together during a fun, community event to meet the NPOs running the 3 top projects and give their final vote to decide how Funds will be distributed among them.

After the event, LIN prepares grant agreements, transfers the Funds and monitors the projects. LIN sends 6-month and 1-year progress reports on the projects to everyone who contributed to the Fund.

d. Objectives of Narrow the Gap Community Fund and Event

- Increase community engagement and collaboration in efforts designed to improve access to opportunities and raise the quality of life for all people in HCMC and surrounding areas.
 - Number of NPOs, Donors and Volunteers involved in the process (making donations, volunteering, submitting proposals, attending trainings)
 - Quality of participation (e.g., TA to NPOs that builds capacity, increased understanding about how to evaluate social projects, etc)
- Sustain the project's results and impacts in the community by creating an environment where community members perform their project's ownership: actively involve, take actions, and monitor the project implementation process.
 - Relationships created (e.g., NPO-Volunteer, Donor to NPO)
 - Participation in site visits
 - Subsequent support provided to grantees (Donations, Volunteers)
- Provide capacity building support to non-profits that implement the funded programs.
 - NPO satisfied with capacity building support provided (or demonstrates increased capacity to the community – quality of the proposal, communications, reports)
 - NPO needs matches with CB support provided.

e. Results and Impacts of Narrow the Gap (numbers, outcomes and testimonials)

The most important objective of the Narrow the Gap Community Fund is to increase local engagement which reflects through the amount of money contributed locally, the number of individual as well as corporate donors, the number of volunteers supporting the fund and the number of people participating in the fund's activities such as social media campaign, community event. The table below shows these figures of Narrow the Gap Round 2 (the thematic round) through 5 years .

Increasing Local Engagement

Since 2009, over **4.2 billion VND** (~USD \$193,000) allocated to **90 projects** by local nonprofits

Thematic Round	Amount Contributed Locally	# Individual Donors	# Corporate Donors	# Volunteers	Attendance @ Community Event
2011 (Migrant)	60m	94	9	12	~147
2012 (Women)	150m	129	54	108	~190
2013 (Children)	327m	105	39	60	~339
2014 (Education)	439m	207	31	104	~450
2015 (Environment)	364m	242	48	109	~374

TESTIMONIALS

• Narrow the Gap for Environment 2015

- "I highly evaluate NTG campaign for Environment 2015 because it creates a great impact on the local community"- **Mr. Pham Phu Ngoc Trai** - Chairman and CEO, Global Integration Business Consultants (GIBC) (Corporate Donor)
- "EXO Foundation has agreed to support CHANGE's Power Up event, we had met during your Narrow the Gap event and we really like their dynamism and motivation! Thank you for connecting us" – **Ms. Alexandra Michat** - Sustainability Coordinator - Product Department, EXO Travel Ho Chi Minh City (Corporate Donor)
- "Awesome campaign! My week feels empty without it" – **Ms. Teana Konstanz**, a 100 Green Days participant (Community Member)
- "Participated in Narrow the Gap, many CHANGE members (both staff and volunteer are working Climate Camp project) were connected with many skilled volunteers. They helped us very much, especially in how to write proposal effective and scientific. That is the reason which help our team could convince community" – **Ms. Nguyen Thi Khanh Dung** - CHANGE, the NTG for Environment third winner (NPO)

• Narrow the Gap for Education 2014

- "Since joining LIN, I have been gradually getting more experience in how to manage a social center and build relationships with other social groups and organizations. And through networking with them, my organization received a lot of support." - **Ms. Hong To Hue Lan** (Manager, CEPORER Hoc Mon, Semi-finalist for a grant in 2014 Narrow the Gap for Education) (NPO)
- "I am very happy because I could contribute to the effort of bringing clean water to the people in Long An. Ms. Lan and everybody from Hoc Mon Social Center provided me the best support they could so that I could finalize the video clip. This volunteer work has helped me to experience the difficult life of certain population and provided me with the

*opportunity to give back to the community.” – **Mr. Vo Thanh Tan (Skilled Volunteer to Ceporer Hoc Mon) (Skilled Volunteer)***

- *“Overall, I am really impressed with how LIN organized the event, which really showcased the spirit of giving. People were willing to share, not only money but also their voice, their vote. The culture of giving appears to be quite vibrant in the south!” - **ISEE (Institute for Studies of Society, Economy and Environment) (NPO)***
- *“We did enjoy very much last Sunday and were glad to see that we contributed to the children's happiness that day. ADEN Services was pleased to sponsor the event and that was great to work with Narrow the Gap Fund this year. We look forward to cooperating again very soon in the future.” - **ADEN Services (Corporate Donor)***
- *“We're glad that the event went really well, and that all the groups have received their deserving funds. We're so excited to learn that next year's theme is education - something we're trying our best to deliver every day. Please keep us posted on LIN's next projects. We are honored to be part of your journey to help many Vietnamese people.” - **Yola Institute (Corporate Donor)***
- *“I'm really glad that we had the opportunity to do the piece for your campaign; [We] really enjoy this kind of work more than anything else we do...” - **Blah Blah Productions (Corporate Donor)***
- **Narrow the Gap for Children 2013**
 - *“The proposals addressed a wide range of issues and suggested solutions to these issues in many creative ways. The NPOs showed their improvement in proposal writing and planning. They also paid more attention to the sustainability and scalability of their projects.” - **Ms. Tran Thi Thanh Huong (Volunteer Member, Narrow the Gap Grant Allocation Committee 2013) (Skilled Volunteer)***
 - *“It is indeed a privilege for Ireka to be able to contribute to your well deserving cause... All the best to LIN continuous effort.” - **Chairman, Ireka Berhad Corporation (Corporate Donor)***
 - *“When we made the video clip, Quy Duc had to film it at 2am but he never complained. He came with us to each household and persuaded them to participate. He never gave up, even when there were a lot of difficulties in getting permission. I would never forget the sight of him lying on the waste container, or lowering his camera into the trash bin to capture the footage. We learned so much on our trip with him, from his action to his experience sharing. I hope that LIN will continue to be the bridge to connect [nonprofits] to such wonderful people.” - **Nhan Ai Social Work Club (2nd prize winner of Narrow the Gap Children, 2013) (NPO)***