

African Resource Mobilization Webinar Series

Transcript of 10th March 2021 webinar on
Finding Alignment: How to Attract and Engage US Corporate Partners

Speakers:

Richard Brown, Vice President of Philanthropy at American Express

Simi Nwogugu, CEO of Junior Achievement Africa

Moderator: Liz Ngonzi, Founder & CEO of The International Social Impact Institute

Organizer: Hafeeza Rashed, Senior Advisor, Communications & Outreach at the King Baudouin Foundation U.S.

00:00:04 - 00:00:22: HAFEEZA RASHED: Welcome. We'll take a minute or two before we get started. Welcome everyone. Welcome. The numbers of the people entering are climbing. So we'll begin in about a minute or two.

00:00:28 - 00:01:05: HAFEEZA RASHED: Hi everybody. We'll begin in just a few moments. Few people are still coming into the room. We'll get started very shortly. Okay. As more people come into the room, I just want to say hello and welcome.

00:01:08 - 00:01:32: HAFEEZA RASHED: I am Hafeeza Rashed, the Senior Advisor, Communications and Outreach at the King Baudouin Foundation United States. It's great to be here and thanks for taking the time today to attend the second webinar in the African resource mobilization webinar series. There are some familiar names in the attendee list but for those who aren't familiar with KBFUS, please allow me a brief word.

00:01:35 - 00:02:28: HAFEEZA RASHED: The King Baudouin Foundation United States facilitates thoughtful, effective giving to Europe and Africa. We enable us donors to support their favorite causes overseas. We also provide European and African nonprofits with cost-effective solutions to raise funds in the United States, through a tool we call an American friends fund. We have over 450 American friends funds including the University of Nairobi, the Harare International Festival of Arts and the Heart Foundation among many others. These funds save African nonprofits in trouble and expense of setting up their own U.S public charity. KBFUS handles all back-office administration, including tax receipts and donor support. So if your organization has donors in the U.S. feel free to reach out to me and we'll be happy to assist.

00:02:32 - 00:03:12: HAFEEZA RASHED: And by the way, if you have donors in Canada, in Europe or in Asia, feel free to reach out to me as well, as we have partners that can help you with donors in these countries and regions as well. My contact email will be made available following the webinar. There are a few additional points I'd like to make. All participants have entered this webinar are in listen only mode. This session is being recorded and our moderator, Ms. Lil Ngonzi will address questions at specific points of the discussion, but I encourage you to use our Q and A feature to submit questions throughout. Thank you for joining us.

00:03:15 - 00:03:39 : LIZ NGONZI: Thank you Hafeeza. I've definitely enjoyed collaborating with you and the rest of the King Baudouin Foundation U.S. team to develop this series over the last few months. I can't believe how many it's been a few months that we've been working on this. Thank you so very much for the opportunity to do so. Welcome everyone. And thank you for taking the time to learn with

us. For those of you joining us again we were very happy to have you with us once more. Please feel free to share your questions in the Q and A.

00:03:42 - 00:04:24 : LIZ NGONZI: For those of you who I've never met before, I am the founder and CEO of the International Social Impact Institute - which I founded last year recognizing that the unprecedented challenges currently facing the social impact sector that highlighted the need for focused creative and well-networked change makers and social impact driven leaders to help guide the sector forward through initiatives with the King Baudouin Foundation U.S., the Nelson Mandela University in South Africa, The Arcus Foundation in New York and Hunter College and The City University of New York. The Institute aims to amplify the voices of social impact leaders from historically marginalized communities in the U.S. and around the world. Facilitate interactions among them and assist in the training of more of them.

00:04:27 - 00:04:56 : LIZ NGONZI: In my other life, I am also an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Fundraising at New York University. So, this topic is very dear to me, and this series is very dear to me. And it's particularly special to me because it enables us to bring together many stakeholders including all of you and our incredible partners: Candid, CIVICUS, Global Alliance, Equity Group Holdings, the Issroff Family Foundation, the Kenya Association of Fundraising Professionals, the Nigeria Network of NGOs and the Tri-State Area Africa Funders Network.

00:04:59 - 00:05:10 : LIZ NGONZI: I encourage you to learn about all of them as they support the social impact sector in many of the countries, in which your organizations operate. Offering research, educational content, networking opportunities, and of course funding.

00:05:12.08 - 00:05:55.04: LIZ NGONZI: In researching today's topic, Finding Alignment: How to attract and engage U.S. corporate partners, we began by speaking with our partner Candid to obtain an understanding about corporate giving to Africa. And we discovered that -- according to their foundations map database -- since 2006, 718 funders have made 10,639 grants valued at \$1.5 billion to over 2000 recipients through corporate giving programs or company sponsored foundations to support activities in Africa. The vast majority have supported initiatives in Ethiopia, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, and South Africa. Presumably corresponding to where the corporations have the strongest local presence.

00:05:58 - 00:06:28 : LIZ NGONZI: In speaking with our Africa based partners -- Nigeria Network of NGOs or NNNGO, and the Kenya Association of Fundraising Professionals -- we learned that the challenges organizations face when seeking to engage with corporations include:

- understanding how to effectively connect with them,
- recognizing the full value of what the corporations have to offer beyond monetary support,
- understanding how to align their own interests with those of the corporations,
- and knowing how to differentiate themselves from other organizations when making a case for support or support applying for funding.

00:06:31 - 00:06:38: LIZ NGONZI: Those factors, along with the cost of finding useful information, deprive many organizations the opportunity to access the funding and other resources offered by corporations.

00:06:38 - 00:07:24: LIZ NGONZI: Against that backdrop, today's webinar is designed to shed light on how to effectively attract and engage U.S. corporate partners. I'd now like to introduce our two distinguished guest speakers.

00:06:53 - 00:07:24: LIZ NGONZI: First, I'm delighted to introduce Richard Brown who is the Vice President of Philanthropy at American Express. He's based in New York where he oversees three of the company's global giving programs: Community service, historic preservation and leadership. Additionally, he was a key presenter of the first ever White House Forum on Nonprofit Leadership in 2011 and he plays a lead role in the initiative on nonprofit talents and leadership. So really a great speaker for us to hear from who definitely knows a lot about corporate social responsibility, corporate philanthropy and can add a great deal to this conversation.

00:07:27 - 00:08:12: LIZ NGONZI: It's also my great pleasure to introduce our second panelist, Simi Nwogugu, who is a sister friend of mine, by virtue of us having a dear sister friend in common. She is the CEO of Junior Achievement Africa and has dedicated most of her working life to two things. Helping women, particularly those are multicultural, and helping young Nigerians, particularly girls. To realize their full leadership potential, specifically in business. Which is especially critical to recognize during the week in which we celebrated International Women's Day. I really appreciate the perspective she can bring to the conversation based on her journey, beginning as a volunteer and donor to Junior Achievement New York, eventually founding Junior Achievement, Nigeria. And now as of November last year, leading Junior Achievement Africa.

00:08:14 - 00:08:19: LIZ NGONZI: I'd love for the panelists to tell us a little bit more about themselves and we'll go into the panel discussion. Richard, can you please start us off?

00:08:22 - 00:08:54: RICHARD BROWN: Sure. Thanks. Great to be here. Thank you for inviting me to participate today. So I've been with American Express for about 13 years and have been responsible for the philanthropy for that time period. I am a grant maker, corporate grant maker now for just over 30 years. I've worked at five other companies in my time here. And so, a little bit a seasoned executive. I would call myself given that I've have been able to work in different companies and have had the ability to change stripes so to speak.

00:08:58 - 00:09:33: RICHARD BROWN: Because every time we go to a new company, you also are normally going to be funding in a new area. So I've had, I've funded in education, I've funded in environment. I've been funded in leadership and other areas because of the different companies where I've worked. And I am no stranger to Africa. I've been to Africa on a number of occasions including Nigeria, Senegal, Ghana, Morocco, and Angola. So I've have a little bit experience in traveling to those countries. Both for vacation, but also for business, so I love the fact that we're doing this and I'm interested in providing some insights that I might have. And thank you for inviting me, Liz.

00:09:35 - 00:09:37: LIZ NGONZI: Okay. Thank you so much. Simi would you like to go next?

00:09:42 - 00:09:48: SIMI NWOGUGU: Sure. Thank you, Liz, for having me and thanks Richard. I just want you to know I've been a card member since 1994.

00:09:50 - 00:09:52: RICHARD BROWN: Oh, great. I love that.

00:09:57 - 00:11:36: SIMI NWOGUGU: So I've been with JA [Junior Achievement] for about 24 years now. Starting at Goldman Sachs when I was an analyst there and Goldman was a major, they're doing that to JA New York. And so was a volunteer with JA New York for about two years, and then spoke to the head of JA New York who mentioned they were an international organization and, you know spearheaded bringing JA to Nigeria. Ran that for three years, went back to business school, stayed on

the board but wasn't really active until we moved back to Nigeria about 11 or 12 years ago. I became an acting board member. And during that time we started developing a strategy to reach 1 million youth by 2020. And so my board decided, "Okay, we need for you to achieve this. We need you to be back in the executive director role." So it, November, 2016, I went back into the executive director role in Nigeria and ran it for three years, reaching all our goals 1 million youth by 2020, going digital and also reaching out to school youth. And so because of that success, JA worldwide asked me to lead Africa. So to replicate that success across the 14 countries we have in Africa and to hopefully scaling to new countries. And so now being with JA Africa since November 20, November last year, 2020. so exactly four years after I went back to Nigeria.

00:11:40 - 00:12:08: LIZ NGONZI: Wow, amazing, Happy International Women's Day to Simi, I didn't wish you that before. Okay, great. I'm so happy to hear from the two of you. And Richard also must mention that the two of us are both "orange people" -- so we're both alums of Syracuse University. I want to make sure that everyone knows that too!

00:12:01.01: LIZ NGONZI: Let's begin the conversation by establishing a baseline of understanding about the reasons why corporations engage with nonprofits and NGOs and the various ways in which they do so.

00:12:11.08: LIZ NGONZI: Richard, can you please share from your perspective, your experience with American Express and of course with the other companies that you've worked with. And Simi, I would then like you to share your perspective both from one year with Goldman Sachs and also from your experience with Junior Achievement Nigeria and Junior Achievement Africa.

00:12:29.03: RICHARD BROWN: So I would first, I would first say that companies, corporations are members of the community. They are in many cases, a company like ours. [American Express has] been in existence since 1870, and we've been in communities across the U.S. and different parts of the world for much of that time. We're based in [and] were founded in New York, but we also have a pretty significant presence in Phoenix [in Arizona] and in Salt Lake City [in Utah] and Sunrise in Florida. And so we are members of those communities.

00:13:03.05: RICHARD BROWN: And because of that, we want to make sure that we are supporting those communities. We know that to be able to do what we do in terms of our card and payment business and our travel business that we are, we have a debt to pay to this, to our society and to our communities. And so, we do that through our grant making. We do that through our philanthropy.

00:13:24.05: RICHARD BROWN: We do that through our in-kind contributions to communities. We do that through our, involving our volunteer, our employees as volunteers both through traditional volunteering, but also pro bono consulting, which has become very popular as well as through direct board service.

00:13:39.05: RICHARD BROWN: And so companies, I believe, have a lot that they can provide to the community. And we feel as though the community organizations and the NGOs that we work with are integral parts of the community and know that they have the trust of the people in those communities and that there are places that people go to for various types of services.

00:13:57.04: RICHARD BROWN: And so it makes a lot of sense for [us], as, as a member of [the] community, to provide that support, to provide that level of grant making so that they can make what

they do possible for those communities. And so it's really become a much more integrated part of what a company does. And so we do this in communities across the U.S. and across the world. And it's really now become part of the DNA of the company as being reaching out to community and doing what we can.

00:14:26.05: LIZ NGONZI: Fantastic. Thank you very much for that.

00:14:28.04: LIZ NGONZI: Simi?

00:14:31.08: SIMI NWOGUGU: Yeah. I agree with Richard. I think we've had a lot of success with companies in various ways. So when I was at Goldman, the reason I was introduced to Junior Achievement was because Goldman encouraged its employees to volunteer in classrooms. And I loved what I was doing even more the work I was doing. And so they're encouraging me to go volunteer, actually helped me discover our world has become my life's career. And, you know, the reason I think Goldman supported JA [Junior Achievement] in New York, and I think American Express actually also supports JA New York was the professionalism of the organization. And that was what I mirrored when I came to start JA in Nigeria.

00:15:22.09: SIMI NWOGUGU: I realized that, you know, they had this corporate members in New York that really helped them set the tone of the organization down to even the staff where they you know, you would feel like you were dealing with credible people and I wanted that same setting. And so in JA New York, really the award is comprised of corporates or representatives of companies. And so I wanted that from the beginning with Junior Achievement. And so what I did was contact the U.S. Embassy and let them know that, you know, I, I live in New York. I'm bringing Junior Achievement to Nigeria and I would like the U.S. Ambassador to host the luncheon for us inviting American companies that may be familiar with the JA brand.

00:16:08.01: SIMI NWOGUGU: You know, with that, some of the companies that support a JA in the USA that operated in Nigeria so that they would, you know if there were not something that with the brand at least they could ask their parents organizations in the U.S. about us. And that really opened the door of the credibility of the invitation coming from the U.S. Embassy and the fact that there was a relationship with parent companies in the U.S. But after that, that'll just open the door for them to come at me to make the presentation.

00:16:39.05: SIMI NWOGUGU: After that it was to me to make a compelling presentation. And I, you know, basically treats it as if I was going to any Goldman Sachs client meeting and had a very professional presentation to them. And they could see that, okay, if we back this person up they have a track record, they speak our language. It wasn't, you know, pages and pages of proposals. I just presented is very straight to the point PowerPoint. And that got them really interested and opened the door to meeting with them one-on-one to tell them more about my vision. And they're like, "Are you going to move back and run it?" And I was like, "Well, if you support me, I will." And they did. And I did! So really that opened the door for us.

00:17:24.00: SIMI NWOGUGU: And I remember one of our initial board members is the Arthur Anderson [accounting firm]. And they knew that [me] being a 24-year-old with two years of work experience, I had no experience setting up an organization. And so what they did was really put their consultants, their accountants at my disposal. So they helped us set up our governance policies, accounting, everything. And up to today KPMG still audits us. And KPMG became Arthur Anderson after they were dissolved.

And so that relationship is a 22-year-old relationship in Nigeria. And that to me was much more than writing a check because they helped me with hiring policies and, you know, taxes, and everything. So, you know when you're looking for corporate relationships, it doesn't always have to be writing a check. It could just be in kind-support; that goes a long way.

00:18:31.00: LIZ NGONZI: I agree 100%. And not in fact, that's a really great way to engage with the corporations, because I know quite a number of corporations that won't fund an organization if their employees don't volunteer there or somehow are engaged with the work that they do. So it's a really good way to sort of start that relationship, you know, by having them involved in the board, having people volunteer, providing pro bono services -- that's super valuable. And I think that's great.

00:18:57.07: LIZ NGONZI: One other point I want to pick up on is how you mentioned just love the fact that you had, you contacted the U.S. Embassy and asked the ambassador to host that, you know sort of that gathering that meeting for you. For organizations that may not be able to do so on their own, I think it's really important to look at associations like the Kenya Association of Fundraising Professionals or Nigeria Network of NGOs that might actually be able to facilitate that process for a smaller, not as well-known organization sort of trying to do something similar.

00:19:31.05: LIZ NGONZI: Now that we've talked about that, I'd like to now gain an understanding of a corporation's interests and how to go about connecting with them. I'd like you to speak about how organizations can create effective cases for support.

00:19:49.03: LIZ NGONZI: And as they prepare to do so:

- How can organizations ensure that the story they tell, right?
So on their website, through social media, through the programs that they create, and even through the composition of their teams, like you mentioned Simi, will enhance their likelihood for success.

00:20:04.09: LIZ NGONZI: Simi, I'd love for you to speak first, because I really love how you talked about what you did with Google. If you can speak a little bit to that in terms of just, you know, you were very strategic in building up your team and finding the right sort of company to, firm to audit your organization and the like. So if you could just speak to that, that'd be wonderful.

00:20:28.00: LIZ NGONZI: And then Richard, if you can come in and provide us with a corporation's perspective after she's finished, that would be wonderful.

00:20:35.01: SIMI NWOGUGU: Okay. Thank you, Liz. You know, from the beginning we were accountable for every Naira that we received. And so I think one thing when dealing with corporations is to ensure transparency. And so first build the structure, and then the team.

00:20:53.05: SIMI NWOGUGU: I was very careful because again I was coming from a background, a corporate background. I was coming from you know, Goldman Sachs, where, we, you don't present to a client if all your T's were crossed, all your I's were dotted.

00:21:12.05: SIMI NWOGUGU: I carried that mentality to Junior Achievement: My presentations were straight to the point. I could really define what the value proposition. Even before you approached a corporation, I'd done the research to ensure that what they support and what I do match because a lot of people would say, "Oh, Dangote Foundation, you have a lot of money. Let's go to Dangote." You

know, but then you need to do the research to figure it out what does Dangote fund and do I fit? And then how do I use the same language they use at their website to pitch what I'm pitching. So that was very important at the beginning. And then I could actually quantify the value I was bringing to our financial literacy organization.

00:22:03.00: SIMI NWOGUGU: I knew that banks would be more interested, because we're training people to be financially literate and open bank accounts. So, you know, aside from the oil companies, we also approached the banks and just basically explained to that what we were doing would eventually get them more customers and things like that.

00:22:22.04: SIMI NWOGUGU: And then we were accountable. I, you know, even though I'd only worked for two years, they knew that I'd worked for an investment bank that was very credible. At least then, it was very credible and would have given me an education that they could rely on. That's credibility.

00:22:49.01: SIMI NWOGUGU: And the most important thing for me was setting up the board. And recruiting people who

- could open doors for me,
- could give in kind support
- [were] they themselves were ethical
- And they had philosophies that matched what we wanted to do.

And so our board played a critical role in those early years in getting us support.

00:23:18.00: SIMI NWOGUGU: And finally, to your question about Google. By the time we applied for the Google Impact Challenge. Junior Achievement was about, I think, 15 years old or 16 years old. And so we had a huge track record. But it wasn't just that. They had 5,000 applications for 12 NGOs that they were going to support. And so they really wanted high quality applications from high quality organizations that they knew that if we put this money in it, they're not going to drown. Because some organizations, if you give them \$500,000, it's just going to be too much [money]. They will not be able to absorb it. And so they need that a certain level of organization.

00:23:59.05: SIMI NWOGUGU: So, you know, my advice is if you're a young NGO just starting out, don't write those huge applications for millions of dollars that you can't absorb. You know progress in a way that you build their relationship over time.

00:24:14.09: SIMI NWOGUGU: You know, [if a corporation] gives you \$50,000 today, you spend it well, you account for it, you get \$100,000 and you build a relationship over time. And so with Google, they did that due diligence. They sent people to our offices, they poured over our books. They interviewed me, they interviewed my team, you know they wanted to see the finance manager, the technology person. They interviewed all of us. And in the end they decided, okay this was a worthy partner. And they selected us to be one of the 12 finalists that got the grants.

00:24:48.08: LIZ NGONZI: Wow. That's amazing. So, I mean, I just want people to understand. So out of 5,000 applicants, there were 12 slots. Is that what it was, Simi?

00:24:57.08: SIMI NWOGUGU: Yes.

00:24:58.07: LIZ NGONZI: And yours was, and you were one of them.

00:25:01.05: SIMI NWOGUGU: Yes.

00:25:02.03: LIZ NGONZI: Right. And so what's important for folks to kind of understand from this is one, it's the team composition. It's the professionalism, understanding how to communicate in their language. You know, the corporation language. Dotting the T's like being really focused on the quality of what you're delivering. And then also understanding that you don't want to go for the big ones right out, right away. You want to sort of slowly build up so that you can effectively absorb that. I think that's wonderful.

00:25:30.07: LIZ NGONZI: Richard, can you please go ahead and share from your perspective of, from corporation's perspective.

00:25:36.07: RICHARD BROWN: Yeah. So Simi really described it quite well. I mean, she's sounds like a real expert at this and she's got a great brand behind her with JA. It's a very well-known brand in the U.S. and it's an organization that a lot of folks, a lot of companies in the U.S. support particularly as you mentioned, the financial services. And so we are a supporter of JA and have actually provided the funding. And then we've had people on their board and what have you in New York and other parts of the U.S. and other parts of the world too. As a matter of fact, I think we actually we're a supporter of JA in China. And so that's a situation though, where you have a very well-known organization. I mean, their brand is recognizable. You say Junior Achievement and most people know what you're talking about. So that's a unique situation to be in and actually a great place to be in terms of attracting companies, attracting other donors.

00:26:32.05: RICHARD BROWN: For those organizations that are not as well-known as those that might even be social entrepreneurs who were just startups. It's going to be a little more challenging as you can imagine, but I think lot of what you said is accurate. You have to start small and be realistic.

00:26:49.08: RICHARD BROWN: You know, when I was going to date myself but when I started in philanthropy, there was no internet. So just let that sink in. For a little while, you know, there was no email, it was very, it was actually quite challenging to figure out what a company does because there was no data of a website that you can just automatically go to, to figure it out. And so it had to be done through different approaches and different networking opportunities. But now with the information that you can get on the web by looking at an organization's guidelines, going to a website like <https://candid.org/> where you could actually figure out what organizations actually support and what companies support what you do.

00:27:28.02: RICHARD BROWN: The most important thing really is alignment. There's no reason to go for a grant with an organization, with a company that just doesn't support what you're doing. If your mission doesn't align and what you're doing doesn't align with what the companies is supporting -- that's already going to be a non-starter.

00:27:48.04: RICHARD BROWN: The other key area is geographic alignment as well. There are definitely places. And Simi mentioned that she, when she was looking for resources, she reached out to financial service organizations like Amex and like a city or whoever, and which is a smart thing because they're certainly concerned about financial literacy, and they want an educated workforce. But you also mentioned the fact that I reached out to oil companies. And actually, one of the reasons why I went to Nigeria was because I worked for Texaco. And so we were very significantly, had a significant presence in

the Niger Delta. And so I didn't actually go to Niger Delta. I actually went to Abuja and to Lagos. But it certainly it was a very important and strategic location for us. And so that made sense, you know, that's, we're going to give back, we're going to accompany are going to give back where they have a presence.

00:28:37.08: RICHARD BROWN: Where they have employees, they have an important market. And so when you're doing your research, you know, look for companies that you see advertised in your country. And those are going to be more those are going to be safer places to go than at a place that says there's no presence. I mean, for instance there are American companies for instance that don't, just don't have a presence in Africa. And so it would probably harder for them to be able to justify a grant to someplace on the continent because of that.

00:29:06.00: RICHARD BROWN: But there are definitely, and I think this is a growing situation where more and more companies who are seeing the importance of Africa. And I think that more and more companies will start investing and start doing a lot more. I know we as a company have begun to do much more in this arena and doing more in Africa and establishing partnerships with other African investment organizations and banks to a larger and more, a wider distribution of our cards as well as merchants who take the card.

00:29:34.09: RICHARD BROWN: So I think a lot of this comes down to networking and I know that it's a challenge, particularly for smaller organizations. But I think that there are organizations that were mentioned earlier in Kenya and Nigeria that are really set up to support that type of engagement and attending opportunities where you can meet people. Now, I guess it's a virtual situation that you would have to do that online, but eventually when the pandemic goes away--which it will do--there'll be opportunities once again to meet in person, to have networking opportunities to meet people who are in companies.

00:30:10.08: RICHARD BROWN: And you know, in many cases, we are, you know, we are eager to find appropriate partners. It's so, it is important for us to have partners on the ground that are doing the important work in communities across Africa and other parts of the world. So we are looking for opportunities. And so it's, it's something that just, it has to be the right match. As the timing is also critical. But it also is *what are you?* Once you have that connection, you know, *how do you actually make that a successful partnership?* And I'm not sure if you want to get into that now, or--

00:30:48.05: LIZ NGONZI: Yeah, I'd love for you to do that, but also you mention time - can you explain that to them? Because timing is really important. If you could kind of delve into that a little bit deeper.

00:30:59.04: RICHARD BROWN: Well timing is important because of when an organization is there, what time of the year they're actually dispersing cash and giving grants. It also has to do with whether their organization is in the right place at the right time e.g. in terms of the season of the year; in terms of when an organization is going to launch something in a particular country. So timing does have an impact on when grants are made. Most companies are on some type of schedule when they have opportunities for funding different programs in their portfolio

00:31:42.03: LIZ NGONZI: Right. So how would one go about even learning about that?

00:31:45.09: RICHARD BROWN: That's harder to find out but on a Candid or [unintelligible]. That's something that you're going to need to find out once you actually start speaking to individuals who are familiar with a company. And [some things] that you can also do is:

- Most companies put a list of who they fund on their website. I know that we do that.
- And so you could potentially network with an organization that has received funding.
- Or you could see what other organizations are on there to see whether you align with the same type of mission that they have.

And that might be another way, another entree into what a company might support. And if it's, if it aligns with what your mission is in your home country.

00:32:26.05: LIZ NGONZI: Yeah I know, I think that's an excellent point. We had a question from Alison Janice. It's for you, Richard, who said, "How does American Express assess their NGO support? How is this decision made?" I think you felt you touched upon it a bit but if you can delve a little bit deeper, I think what she's trying to understand is sort of, you know, the kind of organizations that you support, and you've talked about a little bit and then how do you make decisions? Like, what are the top three things you're looking for in an organization?

00:32:55.08: RICHARD BROWN: So as we have mentioned, we have three (3) grant making areas that we align against. These are the type of organizations [as seen] on our website; it goes into detail in terms of what specifically our criteria is for each of those three areas. And so first and foremost, we want to make sure that an organization aligns against those three grant making [areas], or at least one of those grant making areas that they're going to be requesting funding under. Then we get into the geographic and the location of the organization to make sure it's in a place where we have a, some type of presence or interest. And so that's critical in terms of the assessment of the organizations that we have through a number of different ways. So first and foremost, we are as a company based in the U.S. we only can support [501\(c\)\(3\)](#) organizations. And so we fund organizations in the U.S.--

00:33:46.03: LIZ NGONZI: People who, for people, sorry, for people who're not familiar with what 501 is, can you just....

00:33:52.02: RICHARD BROWN: Yeah, so a 501(c)(3) is an internal revenue service which is the tax collection arm of the government in the United States. And they designate which organizations, which nonprofit organizations can have a 501(c)(3) status. And so that's an actual status that allows a company and allows individuals to donate and get a tax deduction for that contribution. So that's, so companies and individuals in the U.S. actually get a tax deduction for supporting these 501(c)(3) charities. So we support these organizations in the U.S.

00:34:23.05: RICHARD BROWN: We also use groups like the [King Baudouin Foundation United States](#) to support organizations abroad. So we have made grants and continue to make grants. We have worked through the King Baudouin Foundation to support groups in Europe. We've actually made grants to other programs in Africa before. And so that's, that's one vehicle to do that.

00:34:43.04: RICHARD BROWN: And I think, the King Baudouin Foundation United States actually will be a good place for folks to also start in terms of a research because they do have a significant number of organizations that they partner with like American Express, that support places like Africa, countries like in Africa. And so I think that's a great place to start. I have a wonderful relationship with the folks at the King Baudouin Foundation United States and it's a

really a wonderful opportunity for us because they do some things in places where we just aren't able to do it because of this 501(c)(3) status situation. There are situations where we will work with an organization where there's something called a nonprofit determination which essentially says that an, a nonprofit or an NGO located abroad essentially is the same as a U.S. based 501(c)(3). And there's a good deal of paperwork that goes with that.

00:35:38.03: RICHARD BROWN: [The King Baudouin Foundation United States provides] another vehicle for us to support groups directly. So we do that, but in many cases because of [international grantmaking is] cumbersome, and a little bit onerous to do that, we work through groups like the King Baudouin Foundation for Europe and Africa. We work with the [Give2Asia](#), which is a partner of the King Baudouin Foundation United States as well as an organization called The Resource Foundation which supports organizations in the Caribbean and Latin America. And so, you know, these are different vehicles for us to support nonprofit organizations because it's not easy, unfortunately, to support programs abroad. There is a bit of a hurdle to do so and that may be why it's not done and why the flow of cash is not as high as it should be.

00:36:26.09: LIZ NGONZI: Right. And in which case, an organization like Simi's is kind of a model that one should be looking at, because (1): It has a [well-known] brand that's [it is] affiliated with, [i.e.] an entity in the U.S., so that helps. And then the other thing is that, you know, like she said they have audited financials by KPMG, which is again a U.S. firm. So, you know, she's de-risking the way she's telling her story through her choice of board members, through her choice of audit firm and so on and so forth. [That] really helps to make her organization much more attractive to prospective corporate funders and even just basic institutional funders, because she's really made it very attractive and de-risked it significantly. So I think that's important to note. Richard, I know that you'd wanted to make another point before I interjected myself about the, if I'm willing to--

00:37:21.07: RICHARD BROWN: A critical point in terms of, you know, once you've actually received funding from a company, there are some things to think about as it relates to that partnership in terms of what actually creates a mutually beneficial collaboration. And so, it's important that obviously an organization has the capacity and the ability to execute on their mission and that they're able to deliver on what they say they're going to deliver. [For example] if you're an organization that's in education arena, and you say, you're going to educate X number of young people and they're going to be able to have test scores that are increased because of the increased support and added educational benefit, then you know, we're hoping that you are going to meet that [expectation] and that you're going to actually be successful at that. And so, you know, make sure that your program is running on all cylinders, in that it's going to deliver on what was promised. Because, you know, obviously as a company, we want to show that what we're doing is having a benefit to the community and the society where we're doing the grant making. I also think it's important, and I can't underscore this [enough] because I've worked for some companies that aren't necessarily, we'll just call them "sin companies"¹ for short. In short I've worked for ["sin companies"]; you must make sure that before you go into an arrangement with a company that you're comfortable with what they do.

00:38:47.03: LIZ NGONZI: Yup. Absolutely. 100%.

¹ "Sin companies" are involved in activities that are considered unethical, such as alcohol, tobacco, gambling, adult entertainment or weapons.

00:38:50.01: RICHARD BROWN: Your board is signed onto [partnering with a particular company]. And that there's not going to be a situation where you know that you develop the relationship and then you start having to do some outreach and then there may be some opportunities for communicating it to the media and then you get shy because, "Oh I don't know if I want to be associated with this brand." So those decisions have to be made really before you even go look for resources. And so make sure that you're comfortable and that the board is comfortable with the corporate partner that you're getting involved in. And so--

00:39:21.03: LIZ NGONZI: Yeah, absolutely. No, that's a huge point.

00:39:27.06: RICHARD BROWN: It's also important that you're involved with a company that the CEO of your organization is (1) engaged and (2) willing to be a spokesperson for the project and with the folks who you're partnering with. I will tell you that companies are very keen on supporting nonprofit organizations in NGO role but they're also very keen on people knowing about it.

00:39:58.04: LIZ NGONZI: Yup.

RICHARD BROWN: It's not, we don't want it. We're not doing it because we want you to keep it secret. Back when I was in early days there were companies that would make grants anonymously which I thought was kind of interesting but those days are pretty much over. I don't know many companies that are going into partnerships and not wanting to be recognized as a partner. So, you know, it's important that the CEO is willing and to be a spokesperson, be willing to get up in front there, and actually say the name of the company when they're talking about the grant. I've been to several situations where that somehow it kind of drops out of the talking points.

LIZ NGONZI: Right.

00:40:37.01: RICHARD BROWN: If you really want a collaborative partner, you're going into the relationship because

- you know what the company is all about,
- you know what they do,
- you know what their products are,
- you know what their philosophy is,
- you know what their ethics are.

You have to be willing to partner with them all the way through. Because companies are definitely interested in wanting to have that connection and having the ability to be recognized for the support that they're providing. And that's a somewhat different than private foundations but I tell you over the last number of years private foundations have also become very brand savvy--

00:41:08.09: LIZ NGONZI: Absolutely.

00:41:09.09: RICHARD BROWN: And have also been keen on wanting to get their name and their brand and their logo and recognized. And so it's not, it used to be the companies were kind of alone in that, but now I think it's the foundation world is caught up to that. And they're also very keen on being recognized. And they've all created very style, stylistic brands and logos to go on documents and websites, and everything else.

00:41:34.01: LIZ NGONZI: Sure. No, I agree with you when I, whenever I teach my fundraising courses, when I teach about the cycle of donor relations, I always mention that once you have the grant or the gift, it's very important to recognize your donor or, you know, your partner early and often. In a way that makes sense to them. And, you know so you really have to understand what it is they need. So do they need you to go up and be a spokesperson, as you mentioned Richard. Or do they need you to put it on your website? Whatever it is. It's very important to understand what that recognition needs to look like.

00:42:04.09: LIZ NGONZI: I'm going to go ahead and transition to a question for Simi that sort of piggybacks off of this point. So the question comes from the audience and it , "How does JA identify the corporate partner things will be most likely to fund it? And have there been corporate partners that were not a good fit?" I know that you're going to give us that. But at least we know how you determine which corporate partners you want to work with. Simi?

00:42:34.08: SIMI NWOGUGU: So, again, like I mentioned, okay, can you hear me?

00:42:38.09: SIMI NWOGUGU: Yes. Okay. Like I mentioned, in the beginning we do our research to figure out what it is that the organization's fund, before we go in to meet with them. So it would be remiss of [Junior Achievement] to [approach a] healthcare organization. We are going to present financial literacy. So that's [point] number (1).

00:43:04.00: SIMI NWOGUGU: And then [point] number 2 is: When we do get in front of [a company], we try to be as open as possible. So we do not have a prescribed, "Oh, this is [what] I think." We just tell them: These are all the different areas that we [work]; you know, we have three pillars:

- Financial literacy,
- work readiness,
- and entrepreneurship

[at the] primary school, secondary school, university level, where you know, ages five to 27 [years]. So it gives [companies] very broad areas that [Junior Achievement works] in. So [the company] can then say, "Okay, we only do secondary school and we only do entrepreneurship." Okay. Then we have programs that are specifically entrepreneurship for secondary school students. And then we begin the conversation that way. Because once you go into the first conversation with a [specific] proposal, it kind of puts them off. So it's better to go in [with] "We just [want to have] a conversation." I think it's like dating. You want to just, you know, get to know them first before you commit. [For the company], it's the same thing. They want to get to know you first. Before, you know, so it's--

00:44:05.04: LIZ NGONZI: Because it may not be love at first sight.

00:44:09.06: SIMI NWOGUGU: Exactly. So once I establish a relationship and find someone you connect with internally and then that person can also be your internal champion. And so that's one. The second question, which was have we ever said no, basically, yes, we have. I mean, when we started, we, when, we, a lot of our partners, were oil companies and oil servicing firms and there was one particular one that wanted to fund us to do conflict resolution in the Niger Delta. And we said, well, that's not what we do. And it was a lot of money and it was hard to turn it down. But I realized that, you know there are the organizations that do conflict resolution. That's not what we do. And we're not even yet in the Niger Delta. We hope to be there. That was like years ago, of course we're there now. But you know, it was

very hard and I had to go to my board and they said, "Well, you're right. That's not what we do. And you can't." You know, it's a mission creep. You can't allow outside your mission to just get the big money. So yes, you need to be very clear what you do and what you don't do. You know, a part of, you know knowing your mission is knowing what you do not do because otherwise others will dictate. This is what we want to spend our money on, And it would be very hard to say no.

00:45:39.00: LIZ NGONZI: That's a huge point. I really hope people really took notes on that one because you're right. When you're an organization and you're trying to hit your budget and you're you know, you're really, there's a lot of pressure. There's a tendency to think, well, you know, this is big, this large amount of money, let's go ahead and take it. But if it's not aligned with your mission and what you said you're doing, then all of a sudden, like you said there's mission creep and it becomes confusing. People don't know what you're doing. And you don't know what you're doing. So you really do need to stick to what you're great at and obtain the funding for that, which is great. Okay. So I have some other questions coming in from the audience. Julie Hay says, "We always invent." This is I believe for Richard. "We always investigate companies to make sure their CSR aligns with us. But get emails saying, "Thank you for your inquiry but we do not accept cold applications". What are some of the ways of making connections with these companies." Richard, I believe that's for you.

00:46:40.07: RICHARD BROWN: Yeah. It's not easy. I don't want to sugarcoat this. It's not a, it's a challenging situation because we have a there's a lot of nonprofit organizations and many of them do align with the grant making that we do. We have a finite budget but there's an infinite number of opportunities for us to support. So it is a challenge. So you have to find ways to get to people that beyond an email or beyond just submitting an application through a portal that the organization submits proposals to.

00:47:17.05: RICHARD BROWN: And I'll be honest. Once in a while we find something in there that we'll be able to support, but *most of the proposals that come in through, to be honest with you, are going to be declined because [we] just don't have the resources*. A lot of the grants that we make are renewals from the previous year. We have relationships with some organization that go back 10 or more years. And so we're doing a lot of renewals.

00:47:36.01: RICHARD BROWN: And then we do a lot of grants that are proactive where we actually have a very specific opportunity in mind. And we have, in many cases, an organization in mind that we think can actually carry it out in a way that is the way that we think is going to be successful.

00:48:01.04: RICHARD BROWN: So it is, it is challenging but I think what you have to do and I mentioned this before is you have to find a way to create, get a relationship within an organization. It's going to be, it depends on who you are and where you are that will make, that will probably determine how successful you're going to be, because they, the person who you were connecting with has to have an interest in the type of project that you're in. And they have to be open into a dialogue with you in terms of a, someone who they probably don't know. Obviously if you know somebody in a company who can refer you, that's a very a good step forward.

00:48:41.03: RICHARD BROWN: The idea of networking really can't be underscored enough. And that if you have a way to network, with somebody in a company, even if it's not someone in the CSR [Corporate Social Responsibility] department, if it's somebody who is, who works in the

business, even if it's in an Africa or in other parts of the world, if they can at least get through to somebody in the CSR department and introduce you, that would be a great way for you to at least get your foot in the door.

00:49:07.04: RICHARD BROWN: And then you have to do your 'sell job' at that point. But we know it is. There's a lot of opportunities out there and we have to be able to choose and identify those organizations and the partnerships that we think are going to best suit what we're trying to accomplish with our philanthropy. And because we have a, again, as we said I met her mentioned we have a finite budget. There's just so many organizations that we can bring in.

00:49:33.07: RICHARD BROWN: And a lot to be honest with you, a lot these days in what I'm seeing in philanthropy, a trend is that organizations are making larger grants for more significant impact, but making fewer of them because the budgets aren't necessarily increasing. And so a larger grant will mean that they're putting more of their resources towards a bigger bet. And some of the smaller grants are unfortunately no longer, we're no longer able to support them. So these are trends, but I think if you have a phenomenal opportunity, I don't ever try to discourage organizations from pushing forward and trying to make those connections.

00:50:08.05: RICHARD BROWN: I try my best to be as open as I possibly can to new opportunities. And if it's not something that we can fund this early, there might be other opportunities for us to do something with them through our training programs that we have and through other things that we can offer that are not card specific, but that can also as Simi mentioned before, sometimes there's, in kind top contributions or support through pro bono. That could be as good as cash because it's freeing up money for you to do something else because you're provided that service.

00:50:43.05: RICHARD BROWN: So keep trying! I'm certainly an advocate for keeping trying. Make sure that the door [is open]; there's people [who] always tell me "It's [a] no" is really just "Maybe." There's no such thing as no if you're a fundraiser. It's always, "maybe" and "later". So keep that attitude, keep that type of perspective. And then eventually that door will open.

00:51:05.05: LIZ NGONZI: Absolutely. Yeah, so it's "Not yet", right?

00:51:08.06: RICHARD BROWN: Not yet.

00:51:10.03: LIZ NGONZI: Yes. Okay, so I have a question that either one of you can. Oh, sorry, go ahead Simi.

00:51:15.01: SIMI NWOGUGU: Okay. So just to give an example of what Richard was saying is that you may not necessarily want to ask for cash right away. You might invite them to an event. Cultivate the relationship that way. So we have an annual competition that we do entrepreneurship competition and we have someone who's funding us this year. Who, you know, we've been cultivating for years and he's been a judge at the competition. He's, you know, they've done several things. And finally they have room in their portfolio to fund us. And so it's taken years to cultivate that relationship. So really you invite them to events, make them judges, make them volunteer and let them know what it is you do. And then *when there's room in the portfolio, they'll remember you.*

00:52:02.06: LIZ NGONZI: Right. Absolutely. I agree with you 100% relationships. I mean, I hope that people who participated in the first webinars as well as today, understand that all of this comes down to relationships, right? And so it's, it's really making those investments. Whether it's creating those relationships through the associations that are on the ground and they can help to facilitate that relationship building or even just looking at your own network.

00:52:27.02: LIZ NGONZI: I always tell people a really great place to start if you're not really sure what you have available to you is LinkedIn. Because, you know, you can go to LinkedIn and go on the, on a corporations. LinkedIn page and get a sense for how many people in their company may even be connected to you and how you can get through to those people to be able to get to, you know, the funding arm. But that's a great place to get a sense for what your contacts look like and who it is that you might be able to reach out to and from, and go from there.

00:52:56.02: LIZ NGONZI: We've got a question from Cameron Jacob which can go to either one of you. "We opted to use a two-pronged approach to funding including a business arm, to provide a service which would fund our community work. To diminish reliance on funders as resources are already scarce. My question is, is this a good strategy? or does it give the impression that we are independent enough not to need assistance?"

00:53:26.03: RICHARD BROWN: I'm trying to understand the question. So the NGO that has started has a business arm; so they're doing a nonprofit business. So I see that a lot. So a lot of organizations these days that are creating a funding stream by providing a service that they actually charge a fee for [and] that the money can then be used to support the nonprofit side or the social service side of what they're doing. And so if you have a service, if you have something that has to add value that is that you can monetize and that you could actually earn resources for, then that is a fabulous way to increase your revenue [as well as] broaden and diversify your funding stream.

00:53:53.01: RICHARD BROWN: And so if there is something like that I would encourage that very much because it provides you with cash on a regular basis that is more than likely it's going to be regular and you can depend on it. And then you could also fundraise. I don't think I, as a funder, I would not frown upon a nonprofit organization that had [a for-profit side]. And that was clever enough to come up with something that they actually could sell or a service that they could sell, in addition to fundraising. You just had to make sure the books are correct. You know, you, one, you can have the for-profit business can fund the non-profit but the nonprofit business can't fund the for-profit [side]. You got to be careful that way.

00:54:55.06: LIZ NGONZI: Yeah, absolutely. Simi, do you wanna speak to that a little bit? I think Richard's covered it. It's only that we're struggling with also figuring out how to have a reliable income stream that's not reliant on donors. So I would say bravo you're already there. That's great. Okay. Yeah, no, that's wonderful. Okay. I've got a question from Shereen who is here in New York. Hi, Shereen. [She is asking] if Amex has specific funding available to assist with the effects of COVID-19 pandemic. So she's in she's in New York.

00:55:33.09: RICHARD BROWN: Okay. Well, we actually did a great deal last year in response to COVID. And so we had a pretty amazing [year]. I've been in the business as I mentioned for quite some time. I've never had an experience like last year in terms of a dedication and funding of a particular event. And so normally a disaster, because I think COVID is clearly a disaster. Normally a disaster happens in a geographic location. And, you know, in the case of the tsunami it was several geographic locations.

00:56:07.06: RICHARD BROWN: But never has there been a disaster that essentially hit the entire world over. You just kinda remember if you remember this time last year we were just watching it come, creep across the globe and everybody was impacted eventually and continues to be. And so while pandemic is certainly not over and hopefully things are going to improve now that the vaccine has been starting to be delivered, we did provide over \$8 million last year in COVID response.

00:56:37.00: RICHARD BROWN: And actually King Baudouin Foundation United States was one of the organizations that we work through to support programs abroad. And so this year we are going to be doing some related work. We actually, as the result of the pandemic, both the COVID-19, but also the issue of the racial reckoning that taken place here in the United States, we actually have created a new grant making theme called sustaining communities. That's going to be supporting organizations as they come back from the pandemic. And so we will be supporting organizations that are addressing the issues of economic education, health, and racial disparities in the U.S. and other parts of the world. And so we just think this is a really isn't, this is a direct response to what happened in 2020. This would not be something we would do, we would be doing in 2021 if it wasn't what, for what happened in the year last year, that was just as everyone on the call knows, was it tumultuous and continues to be a tumultuous time that we're living in.

00:57:39.07: RICHARD BROWN: And so we're looking to do some things to address issues related to food insecurity and the issue of racial disparities and systemic racism. And so these are some of the things that we'll be tackling going forward into 2021. We've begun to start making some progress in this including for the very first time we we've provided funding to black owned businesses in the United States in a partnership with The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation and for the National Black Chamber. And so that's, the called The Coalition to Back Black Businesses. We invested \$10 million over four years in this particular initiative and actually have gotten additional corporate grant makers to come on board as well. Places like The AIG Foundation, Cummins, the Altis USA and others have joined us in this effort. And so this is the very first time that we've done anything like this, but it's very much aligns with our business to support small businesses. And so this is something that the company really put its effort behind. And so those kinds of things, and obviously black businesses were adversely impacted by pen, by the pandemic disproportionately. And so we were, we decided that we wouldn't put a stake in the ground and do something very proactive with them, But that is definitely, that's definitely a response to COVID. Definitely response to the whole racial issue that took place in the U.S.

00:59:00.05: LIZ NGONZI: Yeah, no, absolutely. That's fantastic. Thank you so much. So I can't believe it but we've come to the end of our time together. I could speak with you the rest of the day. I really enjoy this conversation and it was really fantastic. And I hope that those who joined us today enjoyed it as much as I did, if not more. And I just ask that you apply at least nugget that you received today. I mean, you've received tons of nuggets but I've definitely hope just one and use it to, you know, to connect with and engage with your perspective corporate partners. Please definitely, you know make sure that this has been useful for you. And I want to thank you Richard and Simi. And of course all the rest of you who joined us today. And once again, thanking King Baudouin Foundation U.S. and our partners for bringing us all together,. Hafeeza I'm going to now hand it back to you for some final thoughts.

00:59:49.09: HAFEEZA RASHED: Thank you, Liz and thank you to our speakers, Simi Nwogugu and Richard Brown. This has been an incredible conversation. And I really appreciate that you both shared your expertise and [are] most helpful to our audience [about] your professional experiences. And a special thank you to the audience for taking time out of your busy schedules to join us today. I hope you found the conversation not only interesting, but importantly useful as your organization seeks the resources it needs to fulfill its mission. There are several other webinars in the African resource mobilization webinars series. The next conversation will take place on March 26th and it's titled Affinity based partnerships: How to attract and engage African and diaspora donors. Following this conversation, we will send you a link for the full webinars series and a schedule along with a brief survey. The survey will take fewer than 30 seconds to complete and help us provide useful content to you in the future. Thank you again for joining us.

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