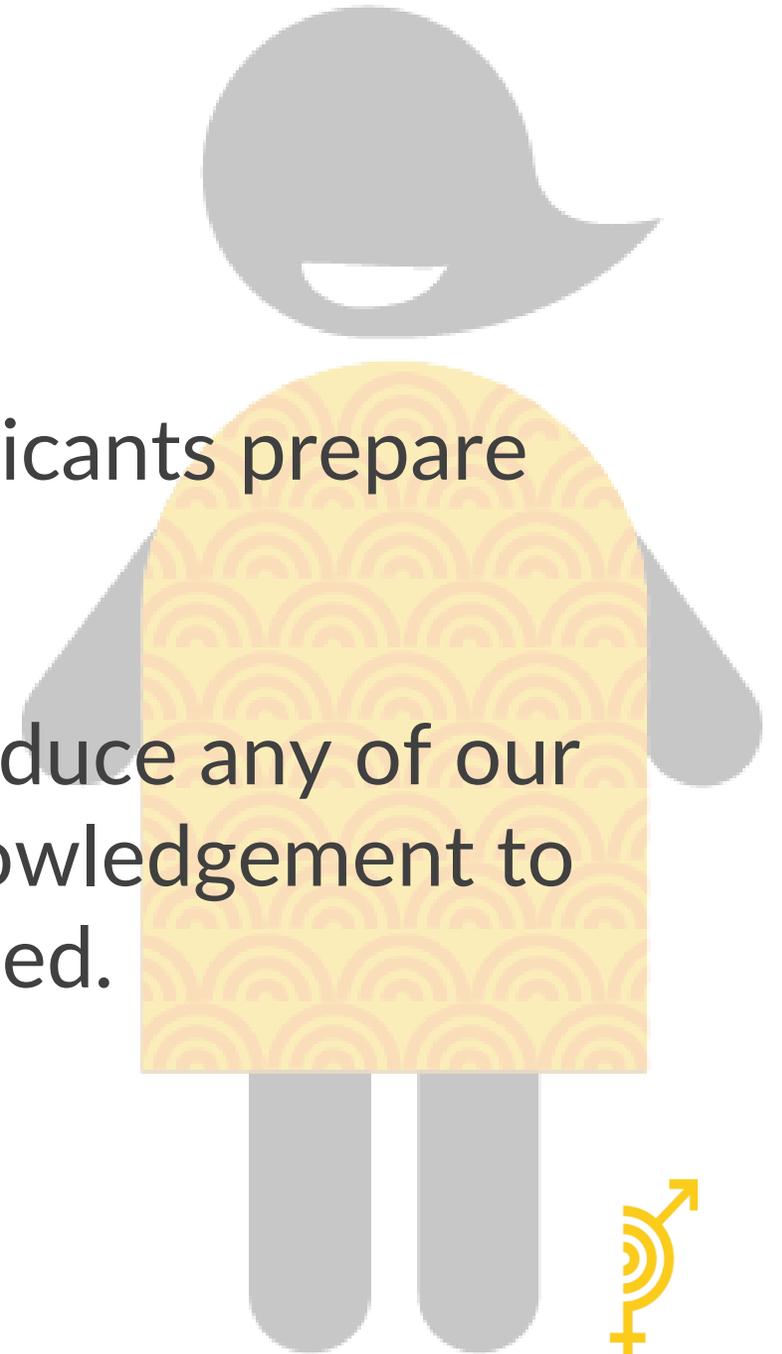# HOW TO WRITE YOUR APPLICATION

User Guide #6

This User Guide is intended to help applicants prepare AmplifyChange grant applications.

Readers are free to download and reproduce any of our user guides. We request that due acknowledgement to AmplifyChange is given where reproduced.

AmplifyChange are here to amplify advocacy and voice in support of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR).

We do this by funding projects from a variety of organisations who reach populations normally less supported by traditional funding mechanisms.

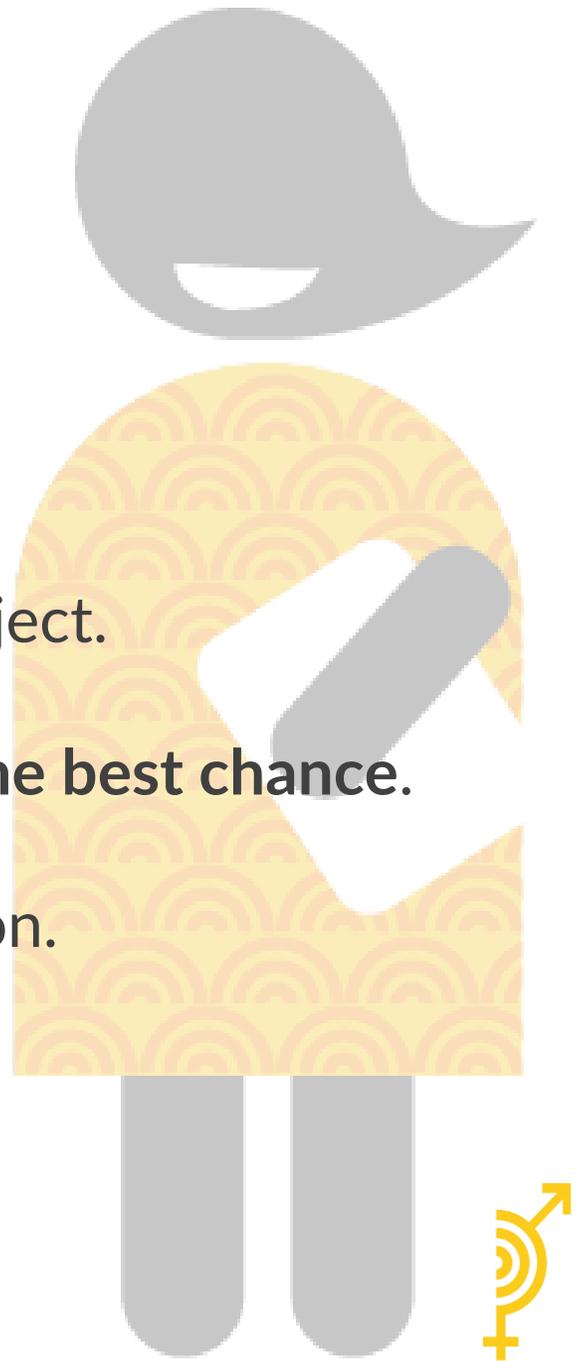Our funds focus on 5 key priority areas in the regions of the world with the most need.

See our Theory of Change on our website.

YOUR APPLICATION

… is the **only way** we can find out about you and your project.

AmplifyChange is a competitive fund. **Give your project the best chance.**

Strong project design results in a strong funding application.

TIPS FOR A STRONG APPLICATION

- Start early!

- Follow the funding round's specific application guidelines

- Answer every question in as much detail, and as specifically, as possible

- Write in clear and simple language

- Write a concise and convincing problem statement and contextual background

- Think through your M&E – it is not an optional extra

- Budget realistically and have back-up detail to hand

- Get in touch if you have any questions

THE BASICS

We are not judging your writing, we are assessing your **project** and **its intended impact.**

The best applications are those which are:

- **Clear** – avoiding jargon

- **To the point**

- **Specific** to the work being proposed

- **Tailored** to the requirements of the funding round

- **Aligned** with AmplifyChange's outcome areas

COMPONENTS OF A STRONG APPLICATION

1. **Problem Statement** – What problem do you want to address?

2. **Project Goal** – What do you hope to achieve?

3. **Project Design** – How will you make this happen?

4. **Monitoring & Evaluation** – How will you know it's working?

5. **Organisational Capacity** – Are you well-placed to carry out the work, or have a plan to meet any existing needs?

6. **Risks** – What could go wrong, and how would you address any issues?

7. **Sustainability** – How can you try to ensure a lasting impact?

8. **Budgeting** – What are the project costs?

We recommend you go through these questions with your full team (including finance, and the intended project beneficiaries) before starting your application.

Tell us about the problem your project is addressing.

- What is/are the SRHR problems you are tackling?

- What are the root causes of this problem?

- What are its impacts on individuals and the community?

- What else is being done about it, and what gaps are there?

Write a **Problem Statement** in your own words describing the issue, why it's important, and what needs to be done. Include specific information about your project area and the context in which you work.

Country A benefits from fairly even coverage with basic family planning services due to the strategic expansion of health care infrastructure over the past ten years, with 40% CPR among reproductive age women (Country A Demographic and Health Survey, 2013). However, health centres offer a limited range of methods, with a focus on short-term methods that rely on male cooperation (A University study, 2014). Given Country A's highly patriarchal culture and limited women's mobility, many women are denied access to the benefits of new technologies such as the injectable and the implant, thereby limiting their reproductive choice and its efficacy. While one Women's Health pilot project (Women's Health Report, 2011) has offered a limited outreach service in four urban districts, the full range of contraceptive methods ought to be integrated into mainstream family planning packages in district health centres to ensure access to true reproductive choice and health for all women.

The women in Country A do not have access to all methods of contraception. There are over 100,000 women of reproductive age. Lack of access to family planning leads to unwanted pregnancy and poor maternal health. Many women want to limit their families but are unable to, for many reasons. It is important that they have choice.

The Project Goal is a statement of the **concrete change** your project aims to help bring about. It should briefly state:

- What you plan to do – *list your key approaches and clear objectives*

- For whom – *list the communities you are working with and how they will be involved*

- Where – *be specific about where you are working*When – *provide the timeframe for the project, including any opportune events*

Your Goal should **link with at least one AmplifyChange Outcome**.

✔

To revise national family planning curricula and initiate the expansion of women's access to the full range of contraceptive methods at district level in all states of Country A by 2023.

*This goal links to **AmplifyChange Outcomes**:*

> *2 – Changes in Policies and Laws*

> *3 – Access to SRHR Resources, Information and Services*

✘

To help women obtain family planning.

When deciding what kind of project to do, think about:

- What expertise/experience do you have?

- What links do you have to key influencers and decision-makers?

- How can you use this to address this problem?

- Whom would you aim to reach, and how?

- What would you hope to achieve for the communities you are targeting?

- How does the project fit in with other SRHR initiatives in your locale?

- In what time frame?

- What challenges or risks might you face, and how will you address them?

Project activities **must link to outputs and outcomes**, along the way to your goal. To visualise this, consider how one might build a home:

Activities:
1. Draft blueprint for house construction
2. Gather materials – wood, nails, hammer, saw
3. Build the house

Output: One home

Outcome: A homeless family is housed

Goal: Individuals are sheltered, resulting in better family health and a stronger community.

When describing your activities, be detailed – what will you do, how many times, where, for how many people?

14

PROJECT DESIGN

Activities: Review existing family planning curricula

4 x meetings with professional medical associations

Develop briefing packs on modern FP methods

4 x meetings with government health officials

Outputs: Analysis of existing FP curricula
First draft of revised FP curricula
300 briefing packs distributed to health centres
Commitment obtained at government level

Outcomes: Broader range of methods included in FP curricula
District health centres better informed of method mix
Government committed to widen choice at district health centres

Goal   ***Increased women's access to full range of contraceptive methods at District level***

- Develop a feasible, logical workplan that schedules your activities in each phase and month of your project

- This will help keep you on track and help you readjust for unforeseen challenges

- Keep it simple but provide detail where needed

- Don't put too many activities in – a few key, good-quality and well thought-out activities are usually enough

- Think about how your workplan links to your budget – make sure you have factored in the right costs

Activity 1 – Meetings with professional medical associations

Building on existing links, we will hold 4 one-day roundtable meetings in City A with 12 representatives from the Country A Medical Association, the Doctors' Group of Country A, the Midwives Alliance and others, for joint review of the current family planning curricula. The meetings will include curricula review and discussion of implementation and policy implications, which will be fed into Activity 3 (meetings with government officials). We will provide secretarial support and follow-up to ensure work is progressed between meetings. Revised curricula and discussion points will be shared with key stakeholders in the sector.

Activity 1 – Meetings
Meetings with doctors, health professionals, government, to improve family planning curricula.

How will you know how things are going?

- **Monitoring –** Collecting information along the way about how the activities and outcomes are going

- **Evaluation –** Using this information, usually at project end and/or at the midpoint, to judge the results of the project

M & E will ensure your project can learn from its successes and challenges, and give it the best chance to succeed.

It will also give you credibility for future work.

There are lots of ways to do M&E, ranging from the simple to the complex. Use a framework that **suits your project** and intended outcomes, in terms of scope, practicality and relevance.

At the very least, **AmplifyChange will be looking for**:

- A set of **indicators and milestones** related to your project goal

- **Links** to one or more of AmplifyChange's Core Outcomes

- Appropriate **methods** of data collection

- **Resources and staff** identified for M&E

M&E resources are listed at the end of this presentation.

Milestones:

- *Dissemination of curricula analysis to key stakeholders*

- *4 meetings held with reps from 6 professional medical associations*

- *Revised curricula segments drafted*

- *Briefing packs distributed*

- *Evidence of commitment at government level*

Milestones:

- *All women of reproductive age have access to all FP methods*

- *Reduced unwanted pregnancy and maternal mortality*

- *Changes in the law relating to family planning*

ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY

As an organisation, do you need any help to implement the project?

Do you have:

- The right management structure?

- Adequate management and financial systems and controls?

- Enough staff members?

- The right staff members?

- The necessary mix of skills?

- The equipment you'll need?

We encourage you to share honest information about your organisation's existing capacity to implement your project.

If you don't have everything you need at the beginning, you will have the opportunity to build in activities and budget lines to support your organisation and team development.

You can check out our Organizational Strengthening Guide and AmplifyChange Learn for advice.

We would benefit from training on policy development at a national level, so that we can maximise the impact of our work with government officials.

We could use advice on financial software that would help us manage the increased income this grant would provide.

We need technical assistance. We also need computers and motorbikes.

As an innovative fund, we are keen to support new or courageous work in difficult environments. So while we are happy to consider a level of 'risk', you need to take time to **identify potential problems** that might hamper implementation, and describe **how you would manage** them.

These could include:

- Political unrest

- Supply stock outs

- Community resistance

- Electricity blackouts

- Violent protest

Tools for assessing risk are listed at the end of this presentation.

We are working in a conservative environment and risk objection from religious and administrative authorities. To minimise objection, we will approach our goals through a maternal health model, emphasising the benefits to family and community of safe, long-term contraception, and look to engage supportive community leaders.

Given rebel activity in urban areas there is some risk of civil strife impacting on safe travel for staff. We have in place organisational Emergency Protocols, which include rescheduling of work when necessary and enhanced workplace security.

Resistance to our ideas and civil war might hinder our efforts.

25

AmplifyChange funding is an investment in long-term social change in SRHR.

Think about **how the benefits of your project will carry on** beyond the project period, if possible.

This may be through partnership work, incorporating training of your beneficiaries to carry the work on after funding, or other methods.

True long-term sustainability is not always possible, but we expect applicants to think about what will happen at project end to keep the momentum going.

Revised and enhanced family planning curricula and a wider choice of contraception will have an impact on generations of women to come. To maintain momentum post-project, we will be identifying 'champions' among our collaborative medical organisations to commit to following up the progress initiated by this project and continuing to voice support. Also, one aim of our meetings with government officials will be to obtain commitment to the establishment of a national family planning forum to regularly review curricula and services, which again will carry forward project benefits into the future.

We will seek funding for more work to carry on the project.

For your project, consider the costs under each activity for:

- Project Activities

- Organisational Strengthening

- Monitoring and Evaluation

- Staff (including any social payments, annual inflation)

- Facilities and Equipment

- Administrative Costs (including project audits)

- Technical Assistance

- Travel

Key things to keep in mind:

- Be realistic about costs

- Your budget must be within the stated funding limit

- Adhere to the application's template and guidelines

- You may include reasonable overhead costs

- Keep detailed breakdowns of your budget lines for reference

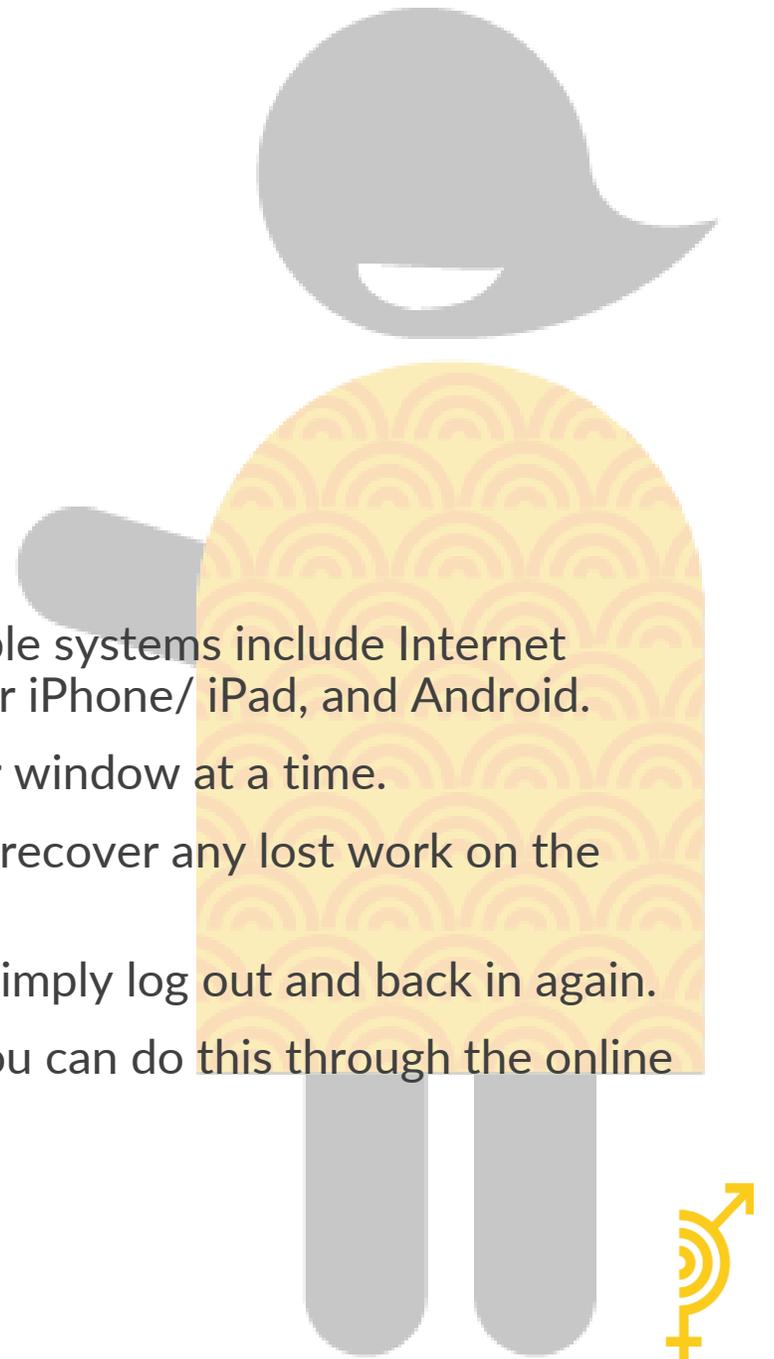# COMMON REASONS APPLICATIONS ARE NOT SUCCESSFUL

- Questions left blank

- Weak Problem Statement – the problem being addressed by the project is unclear, unspecific to the local context or lacking evidence

- Weak Activity section – too many activities, little detail or vague activities

- Weak Budget – costs do not appear to match activities or take into account necessary costs

- Project not relevant to AmplifyChange Priorities, Themes or Outcomes

- Project proposes duplication or unclear impact– no evidence change will be achieved for an unmet need or hard-to-reach group

- Project does not show how it will contribute to the broader movement for SRHR in their context
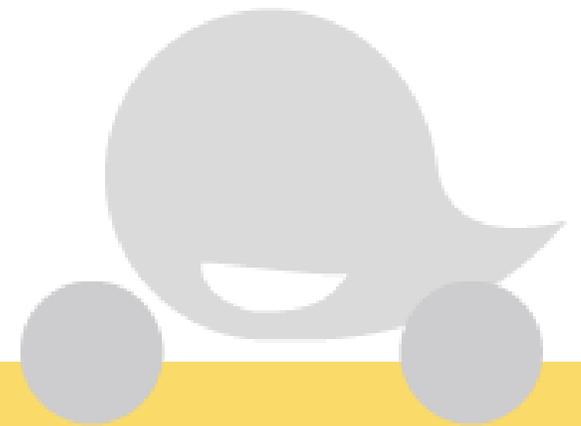
NUTS & BOLTS

A few technical points for using our online application system:

- Please use our online Grants Portal to apply.

- The system will best function on Google Chrome. Other compatible systems include Internet Explorer Version 11 and 11+, Safari, Mozilla Firefox, iOS 10.0+ for iPhone/ iPad, and Android.

- When using our Grants Portal, only log in to one internet browser window at a time.

- Remember to 'Save' your application as you go along. We cannot recover any lost work on the system.

- The system will log you out if you are inactive for over an hour. Simply log out and back in again.

- We welcome video clips that help us understand your project. You can do this through the online system.

- Applications can be submitted in either English or French.

SOURCES OF HELP

AmplifyChange key documents	https://amplifychange.org/knowledge/
Project Design basics	http://www.iyfnet.org/sites/default/files/P4L_ProjDesign_PropWritGuide.pdf https://www.intrac.org/resources/advocacy-a-toolkit-for-small-ngos/
M&E basics	https://www.ncvo.org.uk/help-and-guidance/strategy-and-impact/impact-evaluation/#/ https://www.civicus.org/monitoring-toolkits/
SWOT Analysis framework	https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/strategy/organisational-development/swot-analysis-factsheet#gref
Sustainability	https://www.rotary.org/myrotary/en/document/six-steps-sustainability
Project budgeting	http://www.resourcecentre.org.uk/information/budgets-for-community-groups/

ANNEX: FURTHER WORK EXAMPLE

Project:

Changing Perspectives on Gender-Based Violence through Men's Advocacy in Country B.

Problem Statement:

Gender-based violence has been used as a weapon of war in Country B for eight years during its civil war. According to the UN Study on GBV and War (2013), nearly 15,000 women and girls in Country B are estimated to have been subjected to rape, resulting in illness, unwanted pregnancies and psychological distress as well as wider social issues generated by an increasing culture of women as objects of abuse. The Country B Red Cross provided much needed emergency support for GBV victims in This State during the civil war, but since its end many women are left struggling with the impact of their experience and the stigma with which they are now treated by the community. In particular, in This State, That NGO reports (www.ThatNGO_Report, 2014) many incidences of women victims being estranged from extended family following childbirth, and denied assistance from local community assistance groups because of the stigma of their experience. Building on our strong links with local schools and existing peer-education work with young men in This State, Our NGO will support these young men in advocacy for an end to GBV and the stigma attached to victims.

THANK YOU

www.amplifychange.org