

OPPORTUNITIES AND DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO FUNDING OF ASTRONOMICAL RESEARCH AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

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Abstract. This paper presents an overview of the funding of scientific research activities and popularization of astronomy in the region. The aim of this paper is to draw attention to the current situation, obstacles and opportunities for providing additional financial resources for scientific research institutions and amateur associations. This survey is based on reports of amateur organizations.

1. INTRODUCTION

Research was conducted by interviewing representatives of NGOs that are involved in astronomical research and outreach activities in South Eastern Europe, including organizations from Republic of Serbia, Republic of Croatia and Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). Objective was to cover organizations that are at least four years old and have done at least 10 successful projects in order to understand the way these organizations finance their activities. It is out of great importance from the organizational point of view to provide essential funds for progress and development of new projects and staff. Lack of funds and reliable sources can influence the motivation of staff and lead them to leave the projects and NGOs.

2. RESULTS

Results indicate that the biggest number of those organizations rely on funds provided by their members, from incomes such as memberships and from incomes generated from the realization of their program activities, as a seen in chart number 1.

Organizations covered by this survey annually have only up to four different types of incomes and up to five different sources that provide funding.

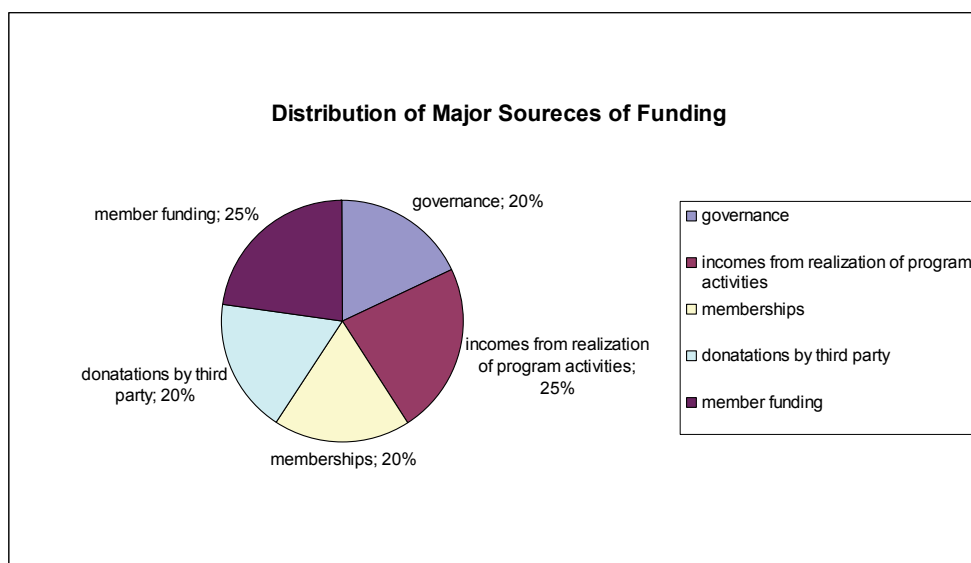


Figure 1: The distribution of major sources of funds.

Although we recognize from Graph 1a limited capacity of organizations to provide their own sources such as incomes from business activities, not a big interest is seen when it comes to a seeking for new sources and types of incomes/donations.

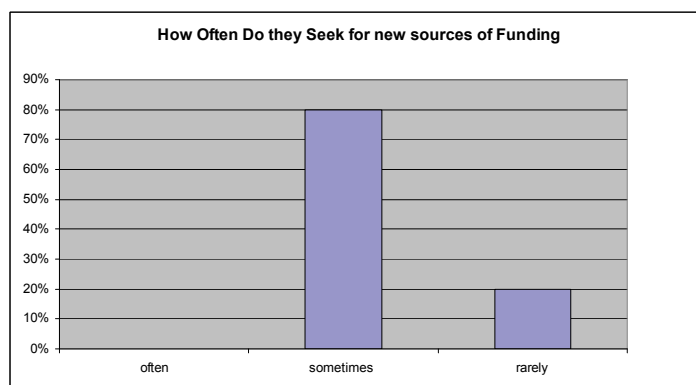


Figure 2: Indicating the frequency of seeking for new funding solutions.

On average 30% of all annual outcomes are covered by institutional sponsors and the satisfaction of general financial situation is graded as 5 on scale from 1 to 10. Research also indicates that only 57.35% of overall regular outcomes are funded during one accounting period.

Programs and activities of over 60% of interviewed organization are totally dependent of their own private funds, since they cannot provide any extra source of funding.

Even 40% of organizations covered by this research do not believe that the increment of available funds and grants will result significantly in motivation of team members, enhancement of working conditions while conducting regular planned activates.

80% of them don't have a specialized team member for fundraising activities, financial planning and budget planning. Only 45% of organizations sometimes think about hiring a professional fundraiser and much as 40% of them strongly believe that they don't need fundraisers. 45% of contacted organizations did not reply after being contacted for a survey.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

In this paper, different approaches of funding projects are presented.

It has been demonstrated how astronomical research and outreach activates by NGOs in the region are funded and how organizations operate in these conditions.

It has been proven that organizations do not have sufficient capacities for fundraising activities, financial planning activities and related operations and that this is one of the reasons of poor funding.

As a result organizations seek 45% of annual funds from its members. This leads to a conclusion that those organizations are financially unstable and highly dependant of members (staff).

Organizations rarely recognize the importance, possibilities and the advantages of hiring professional team members which are devoted to fundraising

This paper represents an important review on the way how astronomical research and outreach activates are funded and it provides closer view on activities of organizations.

To a large extent, dependent of the funds provided by their members, and the fact that they are not capable to cover the costs of their activities, or to facilitate the donations of third parties indicate poor level human resources policy, wrong approach to the business.

References

Čolaković, Filip: 2014, "Fundraising and budgeting of astronomical research and outreach activities in our region" Survey, 20 September 2014.