

Report back to The Funding Network

1. Name of your organisation and date funded by TFN:

ColaLife. Funded at 8 Dec event 2011

2. What does your organisation do?

We aim to make simple medicines as ubiquitous as Cola in developing countries and save children's lives by piggybacking on existing distribution networks and making use of the unused space in drinks crates.

We have not changed our aims, but our first trial in Zambia, which began in December 2011, has already helped our learning.

3. When was your organisation first established?

2009

4. Since receiving funding from TFN how has your organisation changed?

Has your annual turnover changed? Yes, it has increased from £22,000 in 2011 to nearly £500,000 in 2012, mainly because we have begun our first fully funded trial.

Has the number of beneficiaries reached changed? Last year we were only just beginning so had no real beneficiaries; the distribution phase of our first trial began in September 2012. In the first month of the first trial, we have already:

- Designed and produced 41,000 of the new anti-diarrhoea kit for under-5s "Kit Yamoyo" (Kit of Life)
- It has been welcomed by UNICEF, WHO and local partners
- It has been shortlisted in 3 categories of the UK packaging awards
- We have established a baseline in the 2 target districts of Zambia (and in 2 controls)
- Trained 60 shop keepers in remote/rural areas of 2 districts in Zambia in the benefits of the new kit
- Trained 30 Promoters in these districts in health issues to prevent and treat diarrhoea, and in the benefits of Kit Yamoyo
- End of month 1 (31/10/12). 8,000 Kits assembled and packed by our local private sector partner, Pharmanova. 3,650 Kits shipped to wholesalers by our partner Medical Stores Limited. More than 1,000 Kits sold (or exchanged for vouchers) to mothers and caregivers.
- Already, trained shop keepers are selling kits for cash. Shadrick Phiri is a typical rural retailer: From mid September to mid October he had bought 75 Kits from the Wholesaler, sold 33 for vouchers and 19 for cash, giving him a net profit on sales made so far of ZMK 67,600 (about \$13). That may not sound a lot, but where people live on one or two dollars a day, this amount can have a big impact: K48,000 buys a 25kg bag of mealie meal which feeds a family of 6 for two weeks.

5. Can you describe/measure the impact that the specific TFN funded project/work has had?

What actual change did the funded project generate? What proportion of the project/work did TFN fund (eg all/x%)? What evidence do you have for the success or failure of the funded project?

The TFN funding was specifically to help us to frame a sustainability plan for the UK operation, whilst the first funded project went ahead in the field. ColaLife, as a new UK charity, was, and remains, entirely voluntary, with no premises or assets. TFN funding has enabled us to commission a Sustainability Plan, which we are just putting into place. This has enabled us to:

1. Focus on our unique strengths

ColaLife is entirely voluntary and run online to date; the Sustainability Plan process has helped us decide to continue this low-overhead model and plough as much resource as possible into our overseas projects. We have bought into an online management system (for projects and for our Board), which is working well – and enables us to be a 'virtual' organisation operating in Zambia from a UK base. We have also set up online book-keeping/financial management systems, with bought-in online accounting support, which has streamlined both our project accounting and management of our 'core' funding. It means that

the project team in Zambia can manage the book-keeping for UK and Zambia from Zambia. The Board and Zambia team also make very effective use of Skype and Social Networking.

2. Scope out a future strategy

The Sustainability Plan has given us a five year plan for the UK operation, with targets for fund-raising/income generation, phased as funded projects, resourced as much as possible through outsourcing expertise so we can minimise risk and commitment to fixed costs as the organisation brings other overseas trials on stream. Again this plays to our strengths, focussing on online fund-raising – in the short term, concentrating especially on crowd-sourcing models, regular monthly giving products, and DIY/volunteer events.

3. Broadening our supporter base

The Sustainability Plan has helped us to focus on wider audiences, particularly the USA. We have already had one approach from a US based family foundation; and one from a USA-based online donation challenge. We have registered for the CAF American Donor fund to enable us to offer tax-efficient giving to US donors.

4. Avoiding mistakes

The planning process has persuaded us not to 'spread too thin' during the formative years of the organisation. We have for example ruled out (at least at this stage) trying to develop and exploit the 'AidPod' package by cross-selling it to other markets – although we have registered to enable us to licence it. In the short term, we will not attempt to develop and market the pack as a 'merchandising' product (with contents adapted to first world markets) in order to cross-subsidise 'AidPods' in Africa.

Whilst it is early days to say whether this is a success or failure, this under-pinning development of the core organisation is vital to our future success.

6. Could you give us an estimate of how many people have been reached by the TFN funded project/work and by how much?

See answer to question 4. Whilst the TFN funding has not contributed directly to reaching individual beneficiaries in the trial, it will help us to take this trial work forward on a firmer footing.

7. Did receiving the money from TFN make positive difference to your organisation? If yes, in what way? If no, please specify why not?

Were there changes in non-financial support/leverage i.e volunteering hours, relationships, contracts, trustees or media coverage? Did it help to get other grants/donors?

Yes. We now have:

- A sustainability plan in place
- An online financial system
- An online project and Board management system
- (Already) 2 US-based funding possibilities in the pipeline
- Won a further cash award of £5,000 and £1,000 in product (not able to announce yet)

8. Do you have any other comments regarding TFN funding?

It is vital for organisations – especially new ones – to be able to find 'non-restricted' funding. Project funding is easier to find – but if an organisation cannot afford expertise and resource to establish good systems and planning, it will not survive to carry out the all-important project work.

9. Can you please include any relevant photos or clips that may relate to the project.

Please see this photo presentation on Slideshare:

<http://www.slideshare.net/s1m0nb3rry/the-colalife-business-model-in-pictures>

And these recent blog posts:

<http://www.colalife.org/2012/11/11/the-kit-yamoyo-is-a-hit/>

<http://www.colalife.org/2012/11/02/the-october-report-from-katete/>