



FUNDRAISING BRIGHT SPOTS:

STRATEGIES AND INSPIRATION FROM SOCIAL CHANGE ORGANIZATIONS
RAISING MONEY FROM INDIVIDUAL DONORS

By Jeanne Bell and Kim Klein

TWITTER: #ResetDevelopment @JeanneBellCP @kimkleincommons @HaasJrFund

From *UnderDeveloped*

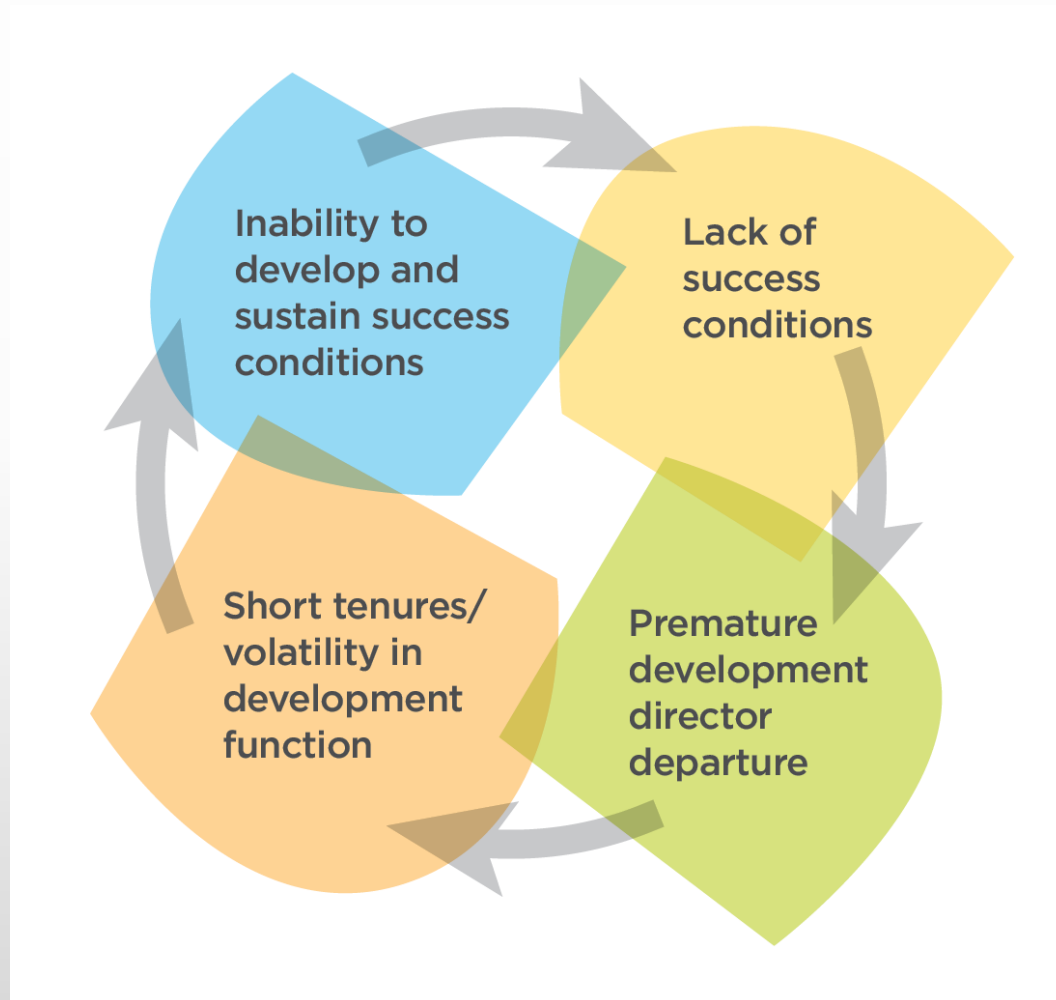
REVOLVING DOOR Organizations are struggling with high turnover and long vacancies in the development director post.

- Vacancy lengths of 6 months on average (nearly 1/2 were longer)
- 50% anticipate leaving their current jobs in two years or less.
- 40% of development directors aren't committed to careers in development

Lack of people in the pipeline

- 50% of EDs said last search didn't produce enough candidates with the right mix of skills and experience.
- 25% of EDs fired last development director.
- 25% of EDs said their development directors have no experience or are novice at current and prospective donor research and at securing gifts.

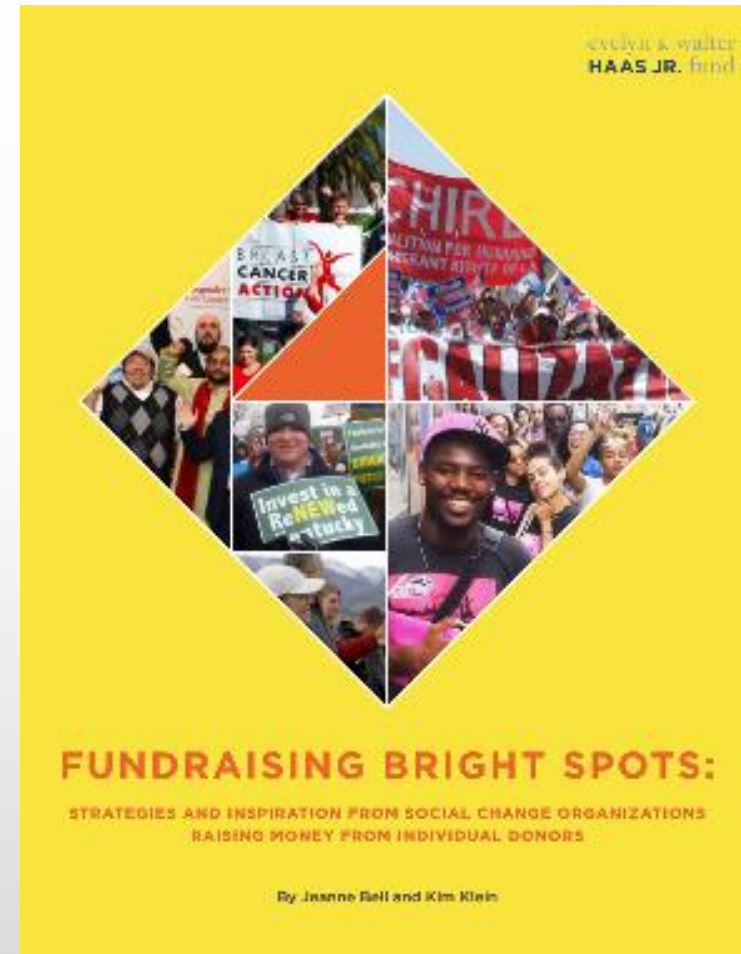
The Vicious Cycle



TWITTER: #ResetDevelopment @JeanneBellCP
@kimkleincommons @HaasJrFund

Fundraising Bright Spots

- In-depth interviews with staff, board, volunteers, and donors of 16 social justice organizations
- Together they raised over \$14 million in 2014-15 from individual donors
- “Regular” groups who are *not* caught in the “vicious cycle”
- Read it here:
<https://www.compasspoint.org/fundraising-brightspots>



Organizations

At the Crossroads

Breast Cancer Action

CHIRLA

Casa de Maryland

FIERCE

Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement

Jewish Voice for Peace

Mono Lake Committee

Mujeres Unidas y Activas

National Center for Lesbian Rights

Northern Plains Resource Council

Nebraska Apple Seed

PLAN Nevada

Kentuckians for the Commonwealth

Student Action for Farmworkers

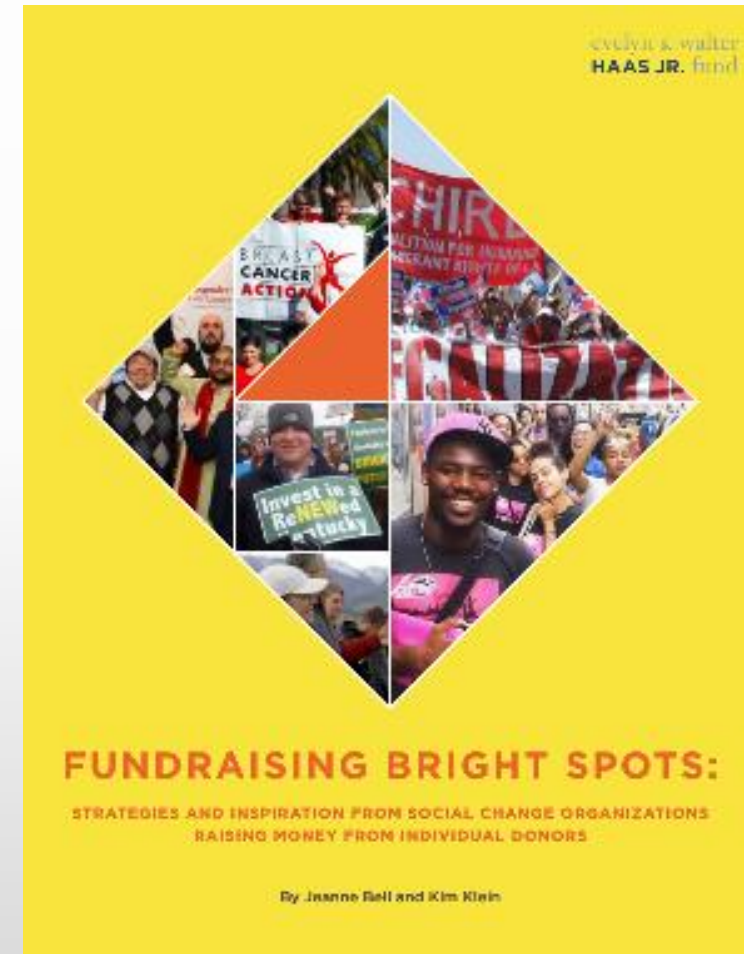
Transgender Law Center

#1 FUNDRAISING IS CORE TO THE ORGANIZATION'S IDENTITY

“I encourage other organizations and leaders to feel a confidence and a comfort in focusing on what you do and how you do it and to trust that that will connect you with other likeminded people.”

Fundraising Bright Spots Mindsets

- The decision to raise money from individuals—as well as the approaches used to do so—are steeped in existing organizational values.
- Being genuine about who you are and what you stand for as an organization is core to fundraising success.
- Fundraising is a form of organizing and power-building, not merely a strategy for financing the organization’s work.

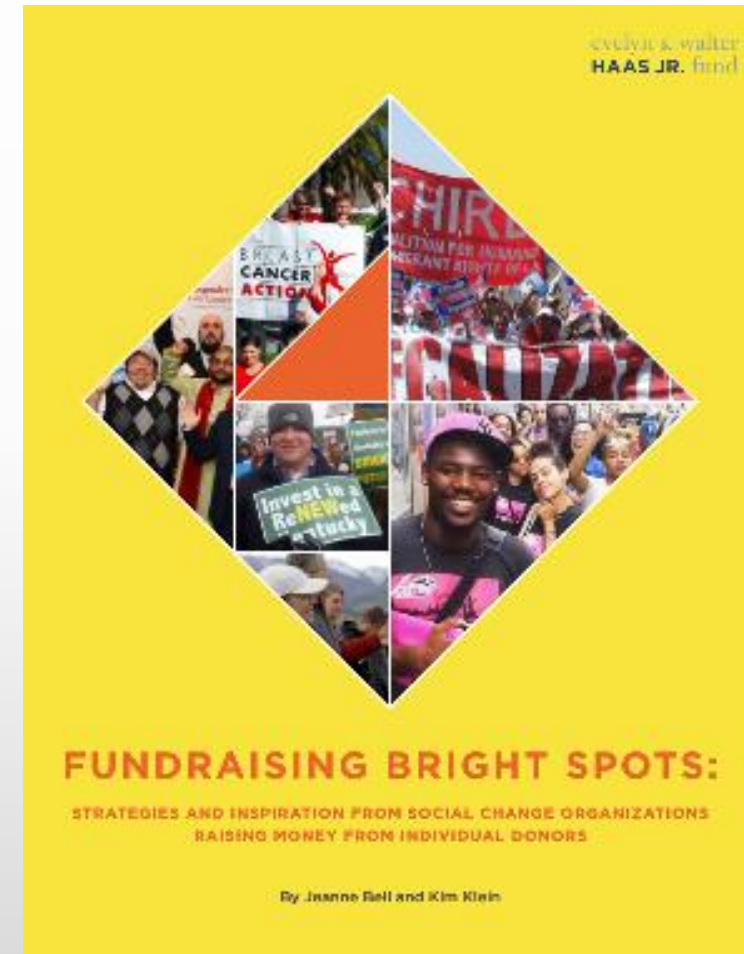


#2 FUNDRAISING IS DISTRIBUTED BROADLY ACROSS STAFF, BOARD, AND VOLUNTEERS

“It’s not about someone being professional or educated in a certain way. It’s really about shedding light on the fact that we already have these skills in communities of color. It’s about making visible and lifting up the resourcefulness that we’ve always had.”

Fundraising Bright Spots Mindsets

- Fundraising is not the purview of a select group of professionals, but a process, if well-supported, that anyone can engage in.
- Development directors are organizational leaders focused on skill building, culture change, and systems development to support others in fundraising.
- The conversation about fundraising goals and progress belongs everywhere. It's not contained in a single department or confined to a single team.

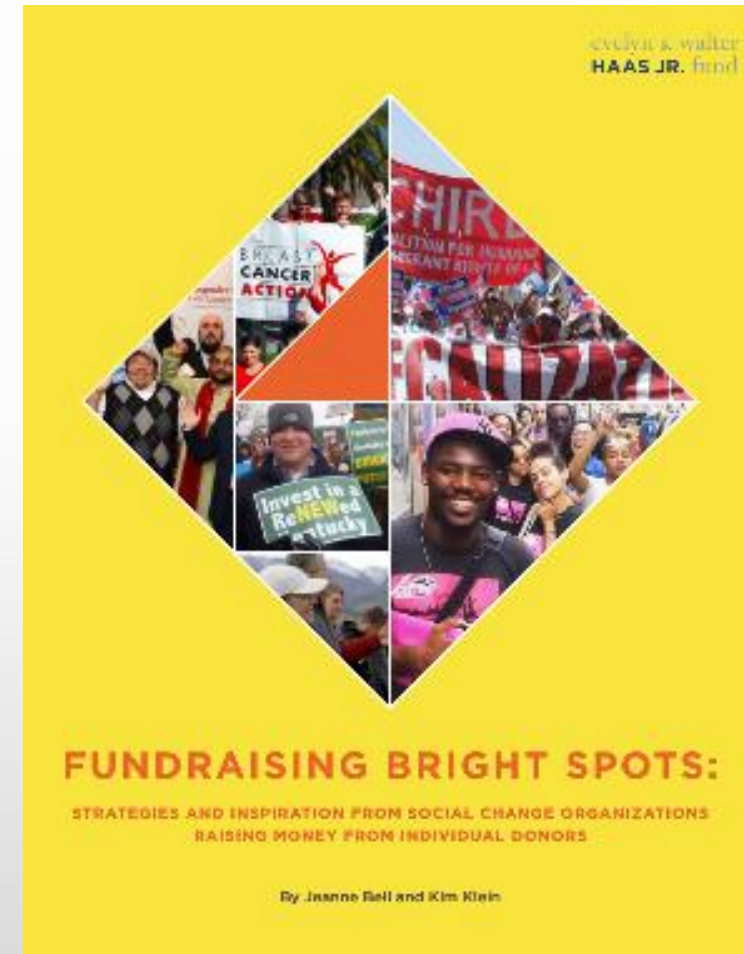


#3 FUNDRAISING SUCCEEDS BECAUSE OF AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS WITH DONORS BUILT ON STRONG, TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS AMONG STAFF, BOARD, AND VOLUNTEERS

“If NCLR hired a small army of people who were very organized and less passionate, it wouldn’t come through in the same way. They hire people from our community, who reflect our community, who are really passionate about what they are doing. It’s palpable in your interactions with them.”

Fundraising Bright Spots Mindsets

- “Donor” is only one aspect of the many relationships that committed supporters forge with an organization.
- Authentic relationships with donors are part of a larger organizational culture that values relational rather transactional interactions with everyone.
- High trust and accountability among staff and board members allow leaders to weather fundraising’s inevitable ups and downs together.

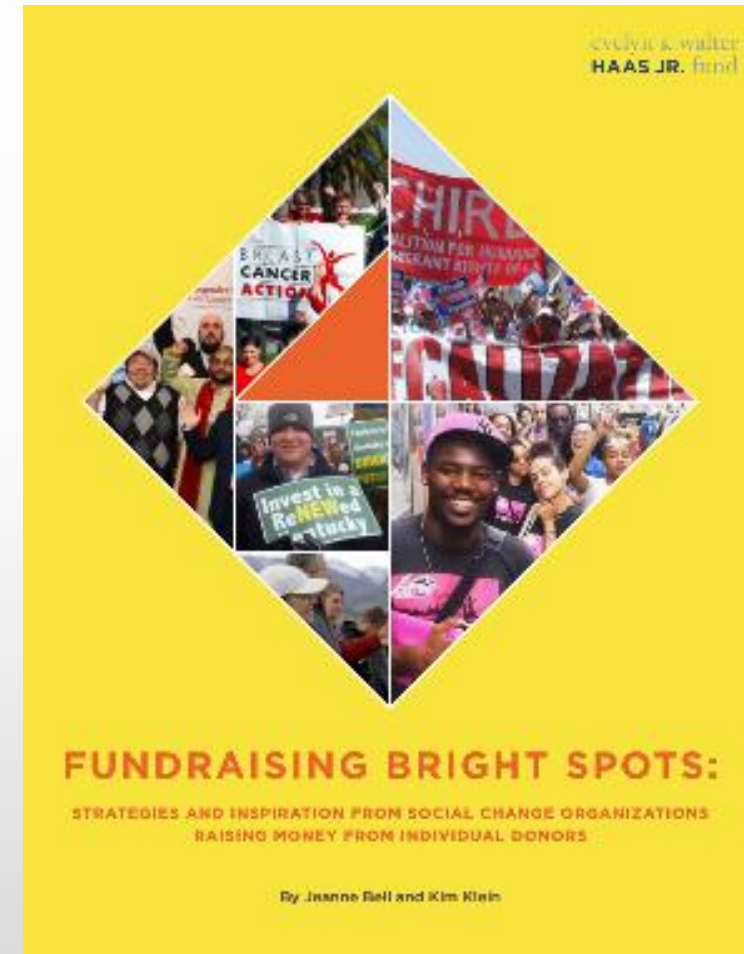


#4 FUNDRAISING IS
CHARACTERIZED BY A
SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO
DONOR ENGAGEMENT AND
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

“We don’t have a singular development plan. We have a system.”

Fundraising Bright Spots Mindsets

- More important than having a perfect system is working whatever system you have with a stance of rigor and continuous improvement.
- Development and communications are inextricably linked; compelling communications are a powerful way to acquire, engage, and retain donors.
- The use of data is not just about having a donor database. It's also about surveying your donors; getting feedback from your fundraisers on what messages are resonating; and studying the performance of every fundraising campaign and event.





FUNDRAISING BRIGHT SPOTS:

STRATEGIES AND INSPIRATION FROM SOCIAL CHANGE ORGANIZATIONS
RAISING MONEY FROM INDIVIDUAL DONORS

By Jeanne Bell and Kim Klein
TWITTER: #ResetDevelopment @JeanneBellCP
@kimkleincommons @HaasJrFund