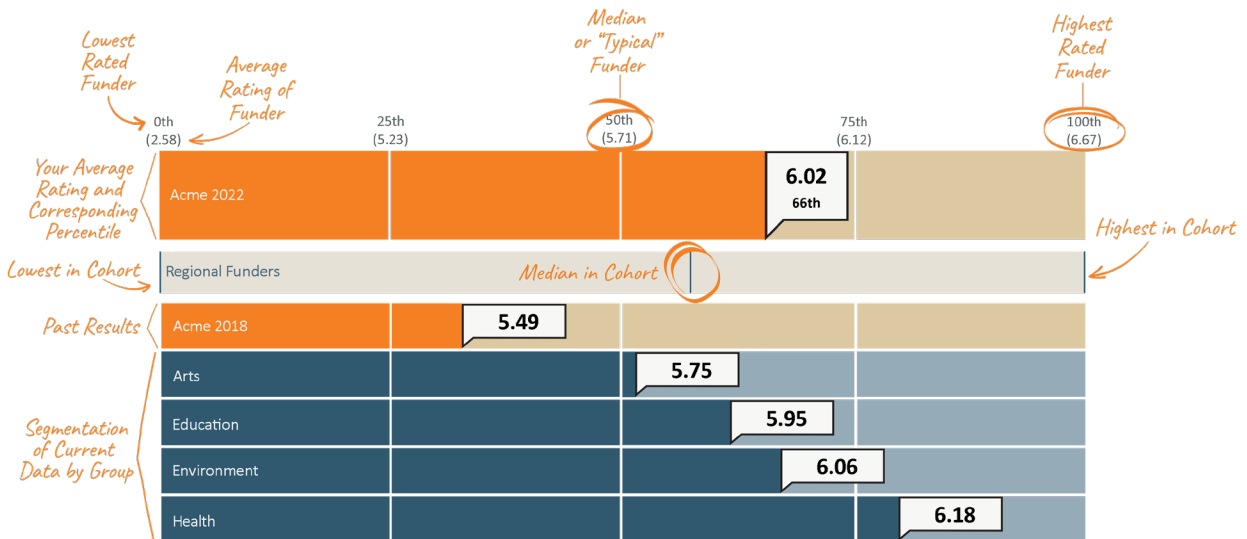


Guide to Humanity United/Humanity United Action 2022 Grantee Perception Report

Prepared by the Center for Effective Philanthropy



Rating Scale

- ▶ Most questions in the grantee survey are asked on a 1-7 rating scale, where 7 most often reflects the positive end of the range.
 - Given the power dynamic between funders and grantees, and the intrinsically positive perceptions of organizations that have received funding, average ratings in the upper half of this 1-7 scale may still represent potential improvement opportunities.

Comparison to CEP’s Dataset

- ▶ Throughout the GPR, “typical” grantee ratings are defined as ratings between the 35th and 65th percentiles in CEP’s overall comparative dataset of over 350 other funders. Ratings at or above the 65th percentile are defined as “higher than typical,” while ratings at or below the 35th percentile are defined as “lower than typical.” These thresholds were selected based on CEP’s analysis of where meaningful differences most commonly occur across funders.

Statistical Significance

- ▶ Grantee ratings described as “significantly” higher or lower throughout this summary of findings reflect statistically significant differences at a P-value less than or equal to 0.1.

Key Findings and Recommendations from the Humanity United/Humanity United Action 2022 Grantee Perception Report

Prepared by the Center for Effective Philanthropy

In September and October of 2022, The Center for Effective Philanthropy conducted a survey of Humanity United's/Humanity United Action's (referred to as "Humanity United" and "HU") grantees, achieving a 64 percent response rate. The memo below outlines CEP's summary of key strengths, opportunities, and recommendations. HU's grantee perceptions should be interpreted in light of the HU's goals and strategies.

This memo accompanies the comprehensive survey results in HU's interactive online report at <https://cep.surveymaterials.org> and in the downloadable online materials, including grantees' written comments. HU's full report also contains more information about survey analysis and methodology.

Overview

The Center for Effective Philanthropy is pleased to share the results of Humanity United's second Grantee Perception Report. The memo below and associated online report provide candid feedback and insights that can be useful in understanding philanthropic funder performance.

CEP previously surveyed grantees of Humanity United in 2011. In the years since, much has changed for the organization, its grantees, and in the field of philanthropy writ large. As such, the 2022 results represent a new benchmark for Humanity United and should be interpreted in light of that context. In general, grantee perceptions in 2022 are similar to, or more positive than in 2011.

When analyzing the results, CEP found no consistent, significant differences in grantee ratings when segmented by: Portfolio, Approval Workflow, Grant Type, or whether a grantee received an HU or HUA grant.

Stellar Relationships Driven by Intentional Interactions and Understanding

- ▶ Humanity United receives exceptionally positive ratings – in the top 20 percent of CEP's comparative dataset – for grantees' comfort approaching HU should a problem arise, and HU's openness to grantee's ideas about its strategy. Perceptions are similarly positive for the extent to which HU exhibits trust in grantee organizations and compassion for those affected by grantees' work.

Key Associations with High Quality Interactions

- ▶ *Intentional Interactions:* The quality, frequency, and intentionality of interactions matter. Ratings are substantially more positive across virtually every measure of the report and across themes of impact, funder-grantee relationships, communications, processes, and DEI from grantees who report:

- Receiving a virtual or in person site visit.
 - More reciprocal contact – grantees who were not the primary initiators of interactions.
 - Having monthly or more frequent contact.
 - Discussing how their organizations would assess the work funded by the grant.
- ▶ *Demonstrating Understanding:* CEP’s research shows that the strength of funder-grantee relationships is often predicted by perceptions of understanding. Grantees’ ratings place Humanity United in the top 20 percent of funders in CEP’s comparative dataset for its understanding of the social, cultural, and socioeconomic factors that affect grantees’ work and for its awareness of the challenges that grantee organizations face.
- Grantees’ written comments highlight these positive perceptions. One grantee, echoing others, writes, “From our perspective, HU understands not only our organization as it exists at present, but also, more importantly, who our organization desires to be. It considers our sustainability as a service provider and considers our views and ever evolving needs.”



“We have never had the level of accompaniment and support from a funder like we have experienced from Humanity United. HU should be a model to other funders, in particular when funding start-ups and new initiatives that require a lot of brainstorming, piloting, and hands on deck.”



“HU is a tremendous partner, and the team are experts in the field, so they are a great ongoing resource. The team is supportive, asks the right questions, and pushes [our] programs to not only be effective but also innovative.”

Impact, and Communications about Strategy

- ▶ Ratings for HU’s impact on grantees’ fields and organizations are lower than typical compared to Humanity United’s custom cohort of peer funders.
- ▶ CEP’s broader research has shown that grant characteristics – specifically size, length, and whether the grant was restricted – are often meaningful predictors of perceptions of impact on grantee organizations, with multi-year unrestricted support being a particularly powerful contribution.
- In 2022, 41 percent of grantees report receiving multi-year funding. While larger than in 2011, and similar to the typical funder, this proportion is still lower than typical compared to Humanity United’s custom cohort of peer funders.
 - When it comes to funding type, nearly half of grantees, a larger than typical proportion of grantees (compared to both HU’s custom cohort and CEP’s comparative dataset) report receiving funding that was unrestricted.
 - Still, the largest theme in grantees’ written suggestions is about HU’s grantmaking. Primarily, grantees ask for more unrestricted support and longer grants (N=31).

Lack of Clarity and Certainty in Communications about Strategy

- ▶ Grantees rate HU in the bottom quarter of CEP’s comparative dataset for the clarity with which Humanity United communicated its goals and strategy, the consistency of the information they receive across HU, and the degree to which grantees understand how their work fits into HU’s broader efforts.
 - These ratings are reflected in grantees’ written comments, often pointing to shifting strategies. As one grantee writes, “the foundation is often in a process of revising its strategy and portfolio level work, leading to an inability to give granular guidance. There is typically a “we have to wait and see” response to questions.”
 - In their suggestions, grantees ask for clearer communications around future funding (N=12) and for opportunities to provide thought partnership to HU about its strategy (N=10)



“The work we have done with our direct programme managers has always been good and clear. But there seem to be layers and layers of different types of people in HU that have to sign off on projects and they all seem to have different values. Communication between them is often opaque....Systems thinking is a very welcome underpinning as an approach to engagement on the ground, but approaches to monitoring and evaluation often seem to be highly linear. In other words the internal processes are not consistent with what you are trying to do on the ground.”



““We understand that HU is undergoing a strategic rethink in relation to the work it does and funds, how it will have impact, at the least in relation to the human rights issues that are the focus of our work. As an organization with a long track record of working on these issues, it would be good to have more explicit opportunities to feed into this. Such opportunities would also enable and encourage us to reflect on our own approaches, strategies and impacts. Whether we continue to receive funding from HU is very contingent on these changes in its own strategies, and this inevitably impacts on our own strategies and plans.”

Selection and Reporting Processes

- ▶ When it comes to Humanity United’s selection process, grantees’ ratings place HU in the top 10 percent of funders for its helpfulness, and in the top 25 percent for the extent to which the selection process was an appropriate level of effort. Grantees also report experiencing little pressure to modify their priorities during the proposal process in order to receive funding.
 - Grantee feedback about the pre-proposal process is generally positive with grantees appreciating the opportunity to build relationships with HU staff.
 - However, a minority theme in the comments point to a lack of clarity about criteria that determine an invitation into the pre-proposal and that an invite back is dependent on existing relationships. As one grantee comments, “As HU doesn’t accept unsolicited applications, our perception is that you have to ‘get

in' through contacts and networking. Thus, the process of developing a relationship with HU is, to a certain degree, dependent on good luck and good connections...We sometimes fear turnover among HU staff could lead to our organization losing its grant, and believe it would then be quite difficult to "get back into the curve" as we would not have access points within HU any longer. Thus, the biggest source of anxiety in this context is seeing a grant officer move to another organization, which we fear could sever our connections with HU."

- Consistent with the lower than typical ratings for clarity and consistency in communications about strategy, ratings are lower than typical for the extent to which HU is clear and transparent about: the selection process requirements and timelines; and the criteria used to decide whether a proposal will be funded or declined.
 - As one grantee writes, "It varies how much internal process information is shared depending on who in the organization you speak with. Some HU staff members are very transparent while others do not share as much."
- ▶ When it comes to HU's reporting process, perceptions are generally positive. Grantee ratings are typical for the straightforwardness of the reporting process and the extent to which it was a helpful opportunity to reflect and learn. Grantees find the reporting process more adaptable than nearly three-quarters of funders in CEP's dataset though less relevant than is typical.



"Extremely valuable interactions with HU staff, who are experts both in terms of content, understanding of challenging realities, and of processes. No pressure applied across the project phases, rather a continuous building of a shared understanding of the aim, processes, and activities, as a result of a valued trust relationship donor-recipient."



"Our processes have been straight-forward and useful because we had a specific grant in response to a specific opportunity. But I have the sense that most HU funding is not via open requests for proposals, so it's a mystery how most grants are really decided upon. Should organizations send in proposals and hope they will be looked for? Or only if asked by a staffer? But then how [do organizations] get on [staff's] radar?"

Diversity Equity, Inclusion, and Justice

- ▶ Overall, grantees provide typical ratings for Humanity United's communication of what diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) means for its work, the degree to which both HU and HU's staff demonstrate that commitment to DEIJ, and their belief that HU is committed to combatting racism.
- ▶ However, there are some consistent differences in experience by gender. Specifically respondents who identify as women are significantly less likely to have discussed how their work would be assessed than respondents who identify as men. Additionally, ratings from respondents who identify as women are significantly lower than respondents who identify as men for the following measures:
- Impact on grantees' fields.

- Understanding of the needs of the people and communities served and the extent to which programmatic priorities reflect that understanding.
- Responsiveness of HU/HUA staff.
- Grantees' understanding of how their funded work fits into HU's/HUA's broader efforts
- HU's/HUA's transparency and openness to ideas from grantees.
- Agreement that most HU/HUA staff embody a strong commitment to explicit commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice.
- Extent to which HU/HUA demonstrates:
 - HU/HUA's strategy centers the ideas, participation, and leadership of diverse stakeholders who represent historically marginalized communities.
 - HU/HUA allows for flexibility in grant timelines, budgets, reporting, and payment arrangements.
- Inclusivity and Diversity: We recognize that diversity is a core strength of humanity. We seek out and value a diversity of perspectives and partners, and we try to elevate the contributions of individuals and communities that aspire to a world free of human exploitation and violent conflict.
- Joy: We seek joy - the expression of inner peace, happiness, and contentment - which is an important source of strength and healing in the face of the persistent human problems that are the focus of our work.
- Agreement that Humanity United/Humanity United Action meets our organization's needs by remaining responsive to adaptation.

Recommendations

Based on its grantee feedback, CEP recommends that Humanity United/Humanity United Action consider the following in order to build on its strengths and address potential areas for improvement:

- ▶ Celebrate grantees' strong ratings of HU's understanding of their context and challenges as well as interactions with staff. Take the time to reflect upon and identify what current practices are driving these high ratings.
 - Consider whether there is capacity to introduce greater degrees of grantee interaction via site visits, discussion of assessments, and more reciprocal contact.
- ▶ Bearing in mind Humanity United's strategy and capacity, consider the possibility of disbursing more multi-year and core-support grants. Recognize the uncertainty caused by shorter grants, compounded by unclear or inconsistent communication, and discuss methods for alleviating grantees' lack of understanding of HU's strategy and goals.
- ▶ Identify which aspects of the selection and reporting process resulted in strong ratings, while also reflecting on how parts of the selection process can be made clearer.
- ▶ Discern what maybe driving the differences in grantee experiences by gender. Consider whether the relationship-intensive preproposal process may be a potential cause.

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