

MDF STRATEGIC PLANNING 2026-2027

I. GRANT-MAKING PROGRAMME

Our vision

MDF should not have to exist. We oppose the racialized immigration laws and policies that force people into destitution based on where they come from. Destitution causes harm to physical and mental wellbeing, forces people into dependency on others, stripping them of dignity and exposing them to exploitation and abuse. Therefore, as long as destitution is designed into the immigration system, we are committed to supporting anyone who is forced into destitution by their immigration status to meet everyday needs, reduce dependency on others, and restore a degree of dignity and freedom.

To achieve this, we will operate a year-round grant making programme to distribute cash grants to people who are destitute because of their immigration status. We will signpost applicants to additional support wherever possible.

Objectives

- 1) A fit for purpose decision-making process:
 - a. Decision-making body involving at least three panel members;
 - b. Systems in place for making timely payments to referral partners;
 - c. Appropriate eligibility criteria and form capturing necessary info;
- 2) Ensure the fund is reaching all those who need it by having a broad network of partners with geographical reach across GM, reaching people from different backgrounds and supporting people with particular issues (eg health needs; particular visa status; etc);
- 3) The programme is sustainable throughout the year;
- 4) Where demand outstrips funding, we manage this as fairly and transparently as possible, with:
 - a. Any restrictions on spending informed by consultations with partners;
 - b. Robust systems in place to plan for temporary suspensions of the fund;
 - c. Effective communication regarding temporary suspensions and reopening with partners and fund recipients;
- 5) Alongside grants, signposting for advice to exit destitution/other support as appropriate.

II. PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Our vision

We want anyone who is destitute in GM to be able to find spaces of welcome and support that are suitable for their circumstances. We want people to understand their rights and entitlements, and we want them to be empowered by expert advice and representation to realise their rights. We therefore want our partner organizations to be guided by lived experience to provide support which is:

- tailored to the people they are working with
- informed by up-to-date knowledge and expertise
- hard-hitting, not afraid to call out injustices and poor decision making from statutory bodies.

We understand the gruelling nature of this work, so we want our partner organisations to feel connected and supported by their peers.

To achieve this, we will facilitate a network where partner organisations can share challenges and best practice to be empowered to do their work alive to the needs/desires of people they're working with.

Objectives

- 1) Understand our partners' work, strengths and needs and understand how well different organisations are/aren't working together;
- 2) Develop our partners' knowledge and expertise as appropriate through training and sharing trusted information;
- 3) Provide in-person and virtual networking opportunities for our referral partners to share challenges, updates and best practice as well as directly linking partners together;
- 4) Spokespeople for the fund with lived experience are active and empowered members of the partnership;
- 5) Use our unique overview to identify systemic issues and mobilise partners to respond.

III. SYSTEMS CHANGE

Our vision

The fund shouldn't have to exist – we want to see a society where destitution is not designed into immigration control, and no one is destitute based on where they come from. While destitution persists, we want the often hidden voices and experiences of those oppressed by immigration law to be heard loud and clear, to drive things to be done differently in GM. Our aims are abolitionist: we aim for reforms which will build towards a future without violent borders and bordering. We want our leaders to be speaking out against destitution and the laws that cause it. We want general publics to be aware of what is happening in their communities, and to be rejecting the politics that drive destitution. At a more incremental level, we want local statutory bodies to be doing everything they can to resist the national policies that drive destitution, to create spaces of welcome and sanctuary within GM.

To achieve this, we will add our voice in order to influence policy, practice and public awareness in GM and beyond.

Objectives

- 1) Lived experience voices are deployed effectively and appropriately throughout our advocacy work, including through a team of spokespeople speaking out against destitution;
- 2) MDF has a robust advocacy strategy, reviewed on an annual basis;
- 3) MDF has a strong evidence base, where trends emerging from operating the fund are explored in greater depth through community consultations with those affected;
- 4) Lived experience voices and evidence base are widely publicised to ensure slow violence of destitution made visible to policymakers and publics, especially through extending the public reach of our #EndDestitution campaign;
- 5) MDF is using our evidence base to name gaps/problems and identify solutions;
- 6) MDF is well-connected to points of influence within GM, and is amplifying and complementing the advocacy of leading campaigning organisations;
- 7) We are adding our voice to opposition to new government policies which will increase destitution, and empowering statutory organisations and policymakers to also oppose these policies;
- 8) MDF shares learnings to evidence replicability of our model and ensure national reach.

V. COMMUNICATIONS

Our vision

The hostility of the policy environment that forces people into destitution rests on language that dehumanises, discredits and stigmatises. We want to see language rooted in lived experience, that centres human dignity and celebrates the intrinsic worth of everyone living in our society. We want to see language that has the courage to name racist and violent state practices. Such language is deployed to further our other visions that build towards a society without destitution – inspiring people to support our grants programme; shaping the spaces of support and welcome across our network; and persuading and energising publics and policymakers to take action and reject the policies that drive people into destitution.

Objectives

- 1) MDF has a strong, recognisable ‘voice’ representing those affected by destitution, which we deploy consistently in public comms, across our network, with other stakeholders, and internally;
- 2) The voices of people with lived experience are central to all messaging and communications, including via a ‘spokesperson network’;
- 3) MDF’s profile and vision is promoted through a range of high-quality public facing communication channels including website, social media, and a regular newsletter;
- 4) Our fundraising ask that is promoted wherever appropriate, and we keep existing donors updated;
- 5) Strong communication pathways are established to, and between, referral partners;
- 6) Application process, and any follow up communication with referral partners, is trauma-informed, person-centred, and opposes the language and practices of the hostile environment;
- 7) We develop a communications strategy.

IV. FINANCE AND FUNDRAISING

Our vision

We have clear oversight of income and expenditure, and we have the necessary income to sustain year-round grant-making activity, develop our advocacy and campaigns work, and create a solid sustainable infrastructure for MDF. We have a rich portfolio of trusted grant funders who appreciate the importance of cash first and are prepared to fund us on a multi-year basis. We have a committed group of regular private donors who are aligned with our values and acting in solidarity with those facing destitution. Our dependable funding pipeline allows us to devote time and resources to realising our strategic vision rather than constantly chasing funding.

Objectives

- 1) We raise the necessary funds from trust funds; individual donors; corporate donations by researching and submitting high quality applications and maintaining good relationships, including through submitting timely evaluation reports;
- 2) We have budget in place for all workstreams for the financial year;

- 3) We manage the systems to maintain a robust and effective funding pipeline, including quarterly reviews during MDAG meetings;
- 4) We monitor expenditure across our different work streams through quarterly reports and meetings with Macc;
- 5) We monitor spend of grants;
- 6) We retain our existing donors and double our donor base;
- 7) We have an effective case for support in place – taking in evidence and messaging;
- 8) We have systems in place to monitor impact of income and report accordingly.