Kelly Tsanova

Program Development & Grants Leader | Governance • Human Rights • Humanitarian Response

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United Kingdom • working remotely worldwide

PROFILE

Program development and grants leader with 20 years' experience designing, funding, and delivering donor-funded programs across Southeast Asia and the United States. Proven record of building funding pipelines, leading competitive proposals and budgets, and ensuring donor compliance for institutional and private funders in complex, politically sensitive environments. Deep field leadership in Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar, and Vietnam across governance, human rights, conflict recovery, protection, and humanitarian response.

CORE COMPETENCIES

- Proposal & concept notes
- Funding pipeline & donor strategy
- Donor & diplomatic engagement
- Donor compliance & reporting
- Consortium & partner management
- Team leadership & capacity building
- Budgeting & grants finance
- MEAL systems & log frames
- Salesforce & donor databases

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- **91% and 55%** grant submission and award rates achieved at Hagar International, Vietnam.
- **94% and 46%** year-over-year growth in annual giving, plus a 900% larger donor database, at MAG America.
- **30+ projects** in a donor-funded portfolio directed as Head of Program at DanChurchAid, Cambodia.
- **New country office** established for MAG in Yangon, Myanmar, with diverse funding streams and a two-year growth strategy.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Resident Program Director

06/2023 – 07/2026

International Republican Institute (IRI) • Bangkok, Thailand

- Led donor-funded governance, civil society, and human rights programming across Southeast Asia, aligning strategy, proposals, reporting, and compliance with institutional donor priorities.
- Coordinated program, finance, operations, MEAL, and partner teams to produce high-quality concept notes, proposals, budgets, and workplans in complex political environments.
- Represented programs to donors, embassies, civil society, and senior stakeholders, translating political analysis into strategic positioning and new partnership opportunities.
- **Key outcome:** Expanded donor positioning and strategic partnerships through evidence-based programming and sustained stakeholder engagement.

Head of Program

09/2018 – 06/2023

DanChurchAid (DCA) • Phnom Penh, Cambodia

- Directed a portfolio of 30+ donor-funded projects across human rights, livelihoods, food security, humanitarian response, and community resilience, delivered through local partners.
- Led proposal design, budget development, donor reporting, and compliance reviews across institutional and private funding streams, working closely with finance, operations, MEAL, and senior leadership.
- Built funding pipelines by analyzing donor priorities, strengthening consortium approaches, and positioning the country program for competitive, compliant bids.
- **Key outcome:** Strengthened the funding pipeline, donor compliance, and partner-led program growth in a constrained civic environment.

Technical Advisor — Grants & Finance

02/2017 – 02/2018

Goutte d'Eau (Damnok Toek) • Phnom Penh, Cambodia

- Led institutional fundraising, proposal design, budgeting, and donor reporting, helping senior leadership diversify funding and improve financial sustainability.
- Developed finance and grants SOPs and trained national staff in budgeting, financial analysis, donor compliance, internal controls, and audit readiness.
- **Key outcome:** Established a comprehensive solicitation strategy and trained senior staff in pipeline generation.

Program Manager 05/2014 – 11/2016
Mines Advisory Group (MAG) International • Yangon, Myanmar

- Oversaw MAG's Myanmar conflict-recovery program, leading donor engagement, program development, budget oversight, partner coordination, and government and diplomatic representation in a highly sensitive operating environment.
- Established MAG's national office in Yangon, secured diverse funding streams, and developed a two-year growth strategy.
- **Key outcome:** Co-led consortium engagement that raised MAG's visibility with diplomatic, government, and humanitarian stakeholders and strengthened donor confidence.

Grants Manager 09/2013 – 04/2014
Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington • Arlington, VA, USA

- Standardized government, foundation, and private grant proposals and processes for 10 program divisions, supporting an $8M organizational budget.
- Introduced agency-wide log frames, reporting systems, and grant calendars to improve donor compliance, proposal quality, and performance tracking.
- **Key outcome:** Built cohesive funding databases and standardized agency messaging for stronger donor engagement.

Performance Quality Manager 01/2013 – 08/2013
Hagar International • Phnom Penh, Cambodia

- Established global MEAL systems for services supporting survivors of gender-based violence and exploitation across eight offices, strengthening donor reporting, impact measurement, and safe use of sensitive data.
- Led integration of the Salesforce donor database across country programs and support offices, improving donor intelligence, grant tracking, and reporting consistency.
- **Key outcome:** Designed flagship data systems and organizational templates for transparent monitoring and evaluation.

Program Development Manager 02/2011 – 01/2013
Hagar International • Hanoi, Vietnam

- Managed grants, donor relations, reporting, M&E, and project design for institutional and private donors.
- Developed strategic frameworks, operational plans, proposals, budgets, and M&E systems to strengthen program design and donor accountability.
- Supervised finance, administration, HR, and IT functions, ensuring donor-compliant delivery.
- **Key outcome:** Increased grant submission and award rates to 91% and 55% respectively, and integrated Salesforce across five offices.

Development & Communications Manager 11/2008 – 02/2011
MAG America • Washington, DC, USA

- Grew annual giving by 94% and 46% year-over-year and expanded the donor database by 900% through donor cultivation, fundraising communications, and grant support.

Matching Grant Program Coordinator / R&P Case Manager 08/2006 – 11/2008
Catholic Charities Refugee Center • Washington, DC, USA

- Managed refugee employment and matching grant deliverables, improving client outcomes, compliance, and service delivery.

Development & Communications Specialist 11/2005 – 08/2006
Catholic Charities Foundation • Washington, DC, USA

- Coordinated events, donor communications, media outreach, and government grant applications.

EDUCATION

Master of Arts, Nationalism Studies 2004 – 2005
Central European University • Budapest, Hungary

Bachelor of Arts, History 1998 – 2002
Gordon College • Wenham, MA, USA • Minors: German; International Studies of Eastern Europe

Languages: English — Native