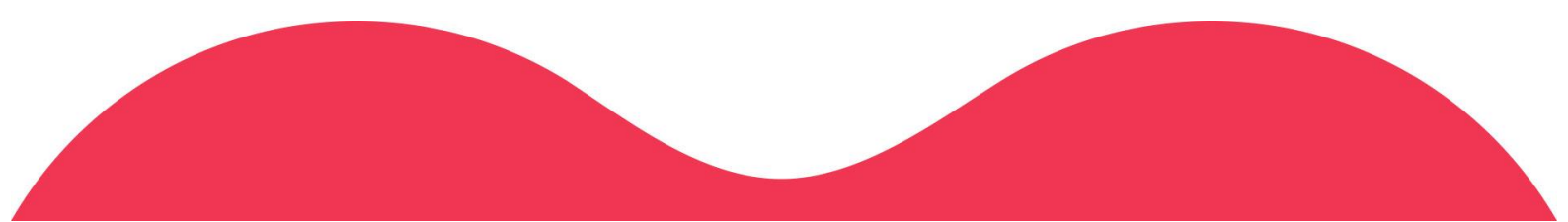


Unrestricted Funding: A Practical Guide for Funders

Case Study: The Famtastisch Foundation

September 2026

Annex to: [Unrestricted Funding: A Practical Guide for Funders](#), Philea 2026



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About the Famtastisch Foundation

[The Famtastisch Foundation](#) was established by the next generation of a German family business. From the outset, the foundation set out to do philanthropy differently, positioning itself as an organisation in an entrepreneurial manner, one that prioritises trust, long-term relationships, and mutual learning over traditional grantmaking models.

The foundation's team brings strong prior experience from the civil society sector. They have extensive experience working in and with non-profit organisations as well as in foundations, contributing a deep understanding of their needs, challenges, and operating realities. The small core team and the board share a common philosophy on funding. As entrepreneurs themselves, Famtastisch's founders understood that systemic change requires organisations to have entrepreneurial freedom – enabled by trust-based, unrestricted funding.

A defining feature of the foundation is its strong emphasis on the people behind organisations. It explicitly works “with people, not organisations”, placing partner well-being at the centre of its relationships.

Goals and strategy

The foundation aims to contribute to the transformation of food systems in Europe, making them healthier, fairer, and more environmentally sustainable. It focuses on organisations that address root causes and aim for structural change rather than short-term solutions.

Its approach is structured around three core pillars:

- Trust-based partnerships
- Systemic change
- Well-being and resilience of partner organisations

These pillars guide all funding and engagement decisions.

Operational approach to unrestricted funding

Unrestricted funding is central to Famtastisch's model and is closely linked to its focus on partner well-being and resilience. The foundation moved towards an unrestricted approach over time. In its early years, grants included some restrictions and light reporting requirements. However, as Famtastisch increasingly focused on funding systemic impact, the foundation also came to see the need for greater flexibility.

Today, funding is designed to:

- Reduce pressure on organisations by removing administrative burdens

- Provide flexibility to allocate resources according to real needs
- Strengthen organisational sustainability and internal capacity
- Allow partners to adapt their strategies as contexts evolve

Targeted, relationship-driven funding

The foundation does not operate open calls. Currently, all partnerships are solicited through networks and references, allowing the team to identify organisations with strong alignment. This ensures a high level of trust from the outset and reduces the burden on applicants.

Active partnership model

Famtastisch acts as a close partner rather than a distant funder. Engagement includes regular check-ins, introductions to other funders, and opportunities for peer exchange.

Selective portfolio

The foundation supports around 20 organisations per year, allowing for deep, relational engagement with each partner.

Long-term orientation

The foundation explicitly seeks long-term partnerships rather than one-off grants, with the intention of accompanying organisations over several years.

No formal application process

There is no formal written application process. Instead, the foundation relies on conversations to understand organisations' direction, ambitions, and evolving objectives. The team acknowledges that these objectives are not fixed and may change over time.

Internally, the team follows a due diligence framework to guide these discussions, ensuring that key aspects are explored consistently while keeping the process informal.

How funding is provided

The foundation follows a structured but informal funding pathway focused on building trust:

- **Initial phase (1 - 1.5 year)**
Partnerships typically begin with a one-year grant (around €50,000-€100,000), designed to get to know the organisation and assess alignment.
- **Long-term support**
If there is a strong fit, this is followed by a longer-term grant, typically over three years, with annual funding of up to maximum €250,000. These grants can be renewed, supporting continuity.

Monitoring and learning

- Regular check-ins take place approximately every three months, or more frequently if needed.
- Conversations focus on questions such as “How are you doing?” rather than performance metrics. Shifting the conversation to that focus leads to a deeper insight into the challenges faced by the partner organisation.
- There is no KPI-based reporting framework. Instead of formal evaluation, the foundation uses an outcome harvesting approach, drawing insights from ongoing dialogue and end-of-year reflections.
- Rather than requiring detailed budgets or receipts, the foundation may ask partners what they intend to use funding for, but does not impose spending constraints.
- Regular retrospectives with partners and the foundation team about what they learned helps both sides to adapt their strategies.

Convening and non-financial support

Beyond funding, the foundation places strong emphasis on creating spaces for trust-building. The team strongly believes that trusting relationships strengthen resilience and are a key factor in successful collaboration. The foundation therefore sees itself as playing an active role in creating spaces for trust-building – for example through annual retreats for all portfolio partners and so-called “Future Labs”, where Famtastisch brings together selected grantee partners working in a shared thematic area. These moments are intentionally designed to give participants space to step back from day-to-day operational pressures, build relationships, reflect and recharge.

If a grantee wishes to convene its own stakeholders, Famtastisch is also open to providing support.

Based on the three core pillars mentioned above, grantees can also access other non-financial support, such as sparring on systemic strategy development and advocacy work.

Contact

Want to know more? Get in touch!

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For more information on the Famtastisch Foundation, visit:
famtastisch.org



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