

Civic Crowdfunding and community assets

Rodrigo Davies
MIT Center for Civic Media

Rodrigo Davies

Researcher, MIT Center for Civic Media
Innovation Fellow, Mayor's Office of Civic Innovation, SF
M.S. Candidate, Comparative Media Studies

Policy and business development advisor, Spacehive
Technical Consultant, UNDP
Co-founder (digital), Conde Nast India
Project manager, Mayor's Office of New Urban
Mechanics, Boston

What is civic crowdfunding?

Where does it come from?

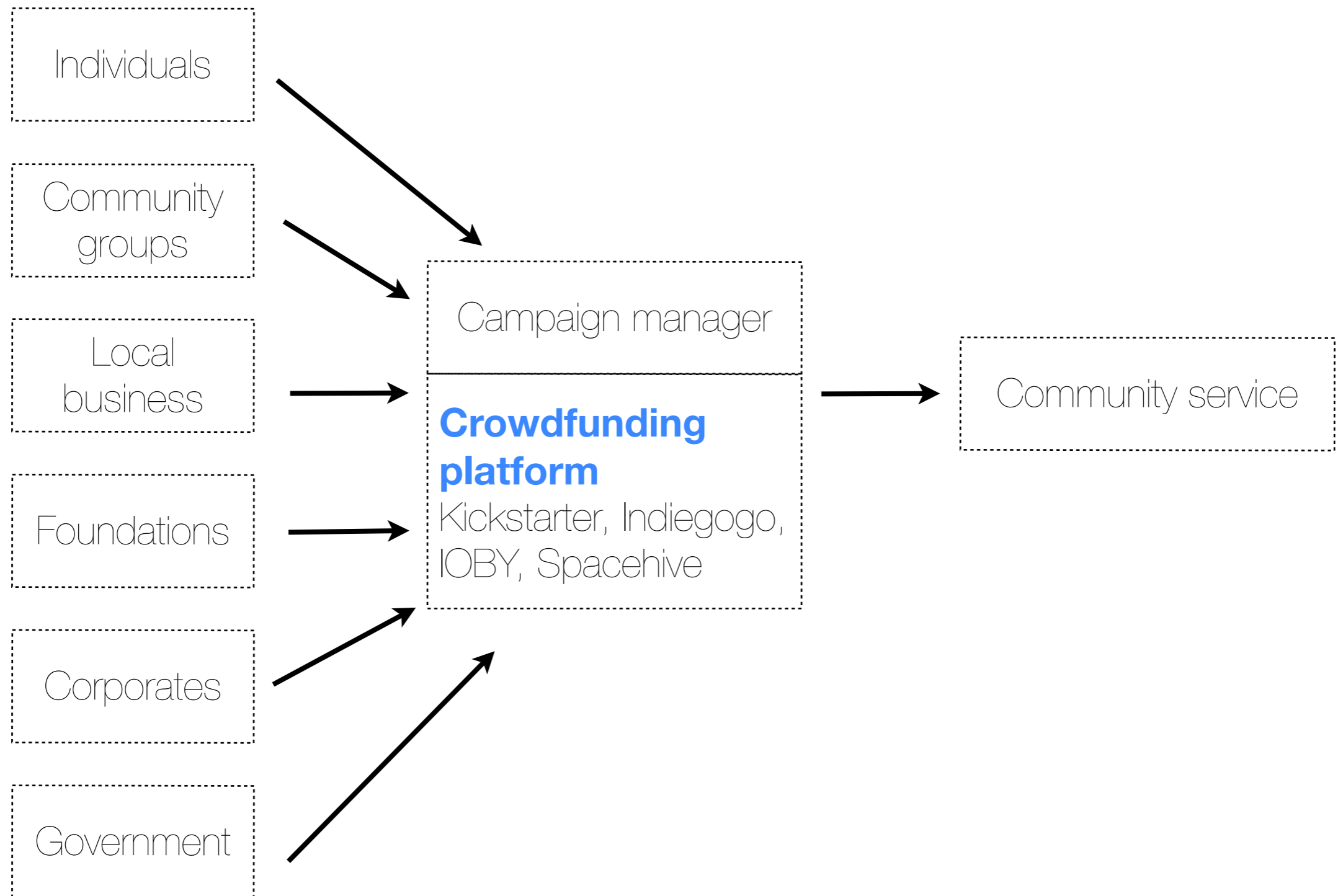
How are people using it now?

What are the opportunities and risks?

What do we know about success?

What role can civic organizations play?

What is civic crowdfunding?



What is civic crowdfunding?

Urgency and short time frame

Diverse range of sponsors

Pledges, not donations

Rewards

Symbolic ownership

Where does civic crowdfunding come from?

March-August 1885

Raised \$100,000

120,000 donors

Central collection point

Daily accounting of
donations

Populist rhetoric

ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS

TRIUMPHANT COMPLETION OF THE WORLD'S FUND
FOR THE LIBERTY PEDESTAL.

Story of the Greatest Popular Subscription Ever Raised in America—How the Republic Was Saved from Lasting Disgrace—An Event for Patriotic Citizens to Rejoice Over—A Roll of Honor Bearing the Names of 120,000 Generous Patriots—The Flags of France and the American Union Floating in Sisterly Sympathy—Over \$2,300 Received Yesterday—The Grand Total Foots Up \$102,006.39—A Generous Lady Pays \$130 for the Washington Cent.



How are people using civic crowdfunding?

To fill funding gaps: Glyn Coch

New activity center for a forgotten community

Raised £40,000 of £792k (\$1.2M) project

107 funders, including government, Tesco, Moondance Foundation

National press coverage, international donor base

Community-managed



How are people using civic crowdfunding?

To build services: Kansas City



Raised \$419,000 of
\$700,000 capital campaign

Launched July 3rd

1200 people, 4000 trips,
12,000+ miles

Multi-million dollar schemes
in other cities

How are people using civic crowdfunding?

To unlock PPP: New York

Using the DOT's Plaza program for public spaces

Two-year lease and contract

Match-funding from DOT

Chance to build new community bonds

IOBY recruiting projects from underserved areas



What are the opportunities and risks?

Build on existing community support
More, faster, cheaper (smaller)
Create a community around projects
Reach a new audience

How can we ensure fairness?
Does it favor better-off communities?
Sustainability needs to be baked in
Transparency and fulfillment

What makes crowdfunding successful?

A clear, simple ask

Pre-built support

Momentum and contagion

Exposure and attention

Endorsement and trust

Civic crowdfunding for civic organizations

Promoter

The screenshot shows a crowdfunding page on the platform neighbor.ly. The project is titled "Sustain Kansas City B-cycle" and is described as a flexible bicycling project by BikeWalkKC in Kansas City. The page features a video of bicycles, a progress bar showing 28 backers and \$419,298 raised (out of a \$700,000 goal), and a countdown timer. A call to action asks for \$10.00 or more, with 12 backers already contributing. The page also includes social media sharing options and a link to the project.

Curator

The screenshot shows the Town Crowdfunder website. The header features the word "highstreet" in large, colorful letters, with "crowdfunder" written below it in speech bubbles. The website is supported by Experian and the Department for Communities and Local Government. The main content area is titled "Town Crowdfunder" and includes a description of the platform's mission to support high streets. There are several featured projects, including "Make Mansfield YOUR hotspot!", "Grow an Entrepreneur for Tomorrow", and "Made In Stirling Pop Up Hotel".

Facilitator

The graphic features a night view of a cityscape with a prominent skyscraper. The text "LIVING INNOVATION ZONES" is displayed in large, bold, yellow and white letters. A stylized logo consisting of a yellow and white 'L' shape is positioned to the right of the text.

Owner

The graphic features a photograph of a library interior with bookshelves and a globe. The text "A place for conversation around long-term thinking. We need your help to bring the salon to life." is displayed above the photo. To the right, there is a call to action for the "Long Now Salon" campaign, which has raised \$222,118 of a \$495k goal, with 173 donors backing the project. The text "The Salon Donor Page" and "Donate \$10 or more" is also present.

Where do we start with crowdfunding?

Start with your community

Stand on the shoulders of fundraising

A new tool, but not for long

