



Local Resource Mobilisation: A How-to Guide

Raising funds from donors in your community
to build resilience at the local level

About this publication

This how-to guide was developed by the Secretariat of the Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR) in partnership with the Change the Game Academy, as a response to the need expressed by GNDR members in the latest capacity-building survey (2018).

When asked about their fundraising capacities and needs, members cited lack of staff with fundraising knowledge as the main challenge in securing funding for their projects and their organisation, lack of awareness of fundraising opportunities, and weak capacities to meet donor requirements. To respond to these needs, the GNDR Secretariat entered into a partnership with the Change the Game Academy, a programme from Wilde Ganzen Foundation. The aim of www.changethegameacademy.org is to support autonomous local organisations to strengthen their fundraising capacity. Raising domestic resources not only enhances financial sustainability, but it also increases community engagement, local ownership and legitimacy of organisations.

During the course of 2019, several GNDR members received face-to-face and online training on local resource mobilisation. This how-to guide was developed to ensure that all members could access and benefit from this capacity strengthening exercise.

About the Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction

GNDR is the largest international network of civil society organisations working to strengthen resilience and reduce risk in communities worldwide. We are more than 1200 organisations, many of them grassroots and local community groups as well as national, regional and international organisations and networks. We support the interface between civil society organisations at the frontline and local, national and international policy-making institutions and governance structures. GNDR members work together to amplify the voices of people most at risk and to influence policies and practices. We build our capacities by creating knowledge, and through collaborative learning and action. Together our network is working to make an impact in over 120 countries.

About Change the Game Academy

Change the Game Academy aims to change the 'rules' of the development game: transferring power to communities and enabling them to shape their own future. Many civil society organisations in the Global South depend on foreign funding to do their work, which makes them vulnerable and puts them at risk of their own work being donor-driven. Change the Game Academy (CtGA) aims to end this dependency by supporting autonomous local organisations to strengthen their fundraising capacity. Raising domestic resources not only enhances financial sustainability, but it also increases community engagement, local ownership and legitimacy of organisations. Additionally, because organisations with a local support base are better positioned to hold their governments accountable, we also train organisations to mobilise support from governments. Change the Game Academy offers e-learning, in-person classroom courses and individual coaching. You can find more information about their courses online: <https://www.changethegameacademy.org/>

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Photo credit: Change the Game Academy

1. Introduction

The world is changing rapidly and so is the landscape of international development assistance. Funding for civil society organisations in many parts of the world is often decreasing, as aid agencies change their thematic and geographical focus, and space for civil society to operate shrinks.¹ Local fundraising therefore becomes an important factor for success among local CSOs.

A consistent challenge for communities and local CSOs is the lack of access to finance: the transfer and sharing of resources is essential for successful localisation. This refers to not only directing international funding to local actors, but also community resources being gathered together for collective action.

Relying on international cooperation is becoming more and more challenging, especially for local level civil society organisations. Although several governments have signed

international agreements that commit to channel more resources to the local level, the proportion of funding that reaches local and national actors still remains about 14% of all foreign aid. And the vast majority of this amount does not reach national or local organisations, but is distributed to intermediaries such as the World Bank, UN agencies, the Red Cross and INGOs.

Local resource mobilisation is an essential part of the localisation movement that aims to empower communities to participate, influence and take decisions on policies that affect their resilience. CSOs have an important role to play in ensuring communities have the skills, knowledge and commitment to engage in decision-making processes at the local level. It is essential that local organisations know how to effectively mobilise resources that support their social objectives within their communities.



GNDR Global Strategy Goal 2: Champion a localisation movement

Sustainable development cannot be achieved without local level leadership. Local communities must be enabled to participate, influence and take decisions on risk-informed development policies and practices because they are the people most at risk. They have critical knowledge and experience of the threats they face and their consequences, the actions which help to reduce risk and barriers to those actions. For GNDR members working at the frontline of disaster risk, the idea of localisation is a revolutionary approach that turns traditional hierarchical global thinking on its head. It means strengthening the capacity of local communities in terms of knowledge and skills; establishing effective systems and procedures in terms of governance and accountable management practice; supporting an enabling policy environment of the national/subnational governments, donor agencies, INGOs and private sector; ensuring there are linkages among local actors at the horizontal level and across the local, national, and international levels, to engage, influence, implement and enforce accountability; and transferring financial resources so that actions match words.

A localisation movement connects local communities in all countries around the world and amplifies their voices at the relevant national and international levels. It emphasises upholding the human rights of people most at risk and recognises that there is knowledge, expertise and commitment at all levels, but local communities and frontline organisations must have space to influence, access to resources and the power to take decisions. A localisation movement with these characteristics is needed to make the transformative change that is required for a world in which people most at risk are able to prevent hazards from becoming disasters.

An analysis of civil society experiences on the ground has shown that local resource mobilisation is a key element of success for CSOs who work to build resilience in their communities.

Strengthening a community's ability to mobilise and manage financial resources was identified by local CSOs as a key element to build sustainable community-based DRM activities. So was mapping and utilising local capacities, a key element that increases a community's ownership of a project and their involvement in the activities.

Community engagement for data collection in Asunción, Paraguay

A local organisation in Paraguay identified community members with a smartphone as potential supporters of their project: collecting data for effective decision-making on health and resilience actions. They reached out to individuals and encouraged them to donate some of their time to gather information through their smartphone. Citizens, community leaders and local government representatives all worked together on this endeavour from the very start of the activity. The local organisation managed to mobilise resources in terms of people's time and social networks to implement their project activities.

Read more here: <https://cbdrm.org/case-studies/giving-face-to-numbers-community-based-social-information-system/>

Local fundraising is also an effective tool to ensure that disaster risk reduction is addressed in an integrated way at the local level. A recent analysis of the role of CSOs in building coherence outlines how some aspects of fundraising are key to ensuring a coherent approach to DRR locally: these include building long-term relationships with responsive donors, and diversifying funding in terms of its source and its length.



Building a resilient community in Jagobiao, Philippines

Community members in Jagobiao, Philippines, have been working together to develop a comprehensive risk assessment of their community to strengthen their own resilience. They reached out to different groups in their localities, to gather a wide range of resources and capacities: they tapped into the funds and skills of local private sector companies, cooperatives and religious associations. Not only did they succeed in mobilising resources from all community members, but they also benefitted from a diversity of views which made the risk assessment fully comprehensive.

Read more here: <https://gndr.org/programmes/coherence.html>

Tapping on individuals and companies' resources has several benefits: it is an effective way to mobilise resources of all kinds, contributes to creating a positive change in society, and makes those who donate feel part of the community. Community ownership has been identified as one of the key elements of community-based resilience-building:³ when you invest in a community project you express your commitment to it, and you show the importance you place on the activity. Importantly, it helps an organisation diversify its funding mix. It is important for any fundraiser to be aware of the organisation's income patterns (where the funding comes from and how many sources of income the organisation has), and their impact. Getting all your income from one source or just a few sources exposes you to a higher risk than if you receive funding from a wide variety of sources.

It is important to recognise and mobilise local resources, which are often ignored when approaching fundraising. Individuals and small to medium companies often represent a big source of funding that goes untapped. The 2019 World Giving Index report by the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF)² found that individuals are among the biggest donors for not-for-profit organisations. It found that "more than two and a half billion people have helped a stranger in the last decade. Helping a stranger is the most commonly performed giving behaviour across the world." Moreover, statistics show that globally one in five adults volunteer or have volunteered over the past decade. Interestingly, the countries that recorded the biggest rise in numbers of people donating or volunteering are among middle-income and low-income countries: this shows that there is a huge potential to mobilise resources in your own community.

1. CIVICUS State of Civil Society Report 2019 (https://www.civicus.org/documents/reports-and-publications/SOCS/2019/state-of-civil-society-report-2019_executive-summary.pdf)
2. CAF World Giving Index 10th Edition (<https://www.cafonline.org/about-us/publications/2019-publications/caf-world-giving-index-10th-edition>)
3. Explore GNDR's work on community-based disaster risk management here: www.cbdrm.org



Photo credit: Change the Game Academy

2. What do you need to know before starting your fundraising activities?

Principles

In any fundraising activity, whether you are targeting an individual in your community, a donor government or a private sector company, it is essential to keep in mind some key principles that make fundraising successful.

- 1. Fundraising is a person to person business.** Whether you are reaching out to someone in person, via phone or via email, it is important to keep in mind that you are eventually trying to move individuals to support the people you are working for. In other words, you are connecting people with resources to support people who are in need of resources.
- 2. It requires long-term commitment.** To become successful in your fundraising, you need to invest time to build your image with the public: you will learn as you go along how to best approach different people and how to best present your organisation. There is a natural high failure rate, even with the best fundraisers, and this should be seen as a learning experience, not a reason to give up.
- 3. Reach hearts and minds.** Keeping in mind the person-to-person aspect of fundraising, reaching hearts and minds is one of the best success strategies to encourage individuals or companies to invest in your organisation. Do your best to touch people on an emotional level, and to present rationally convincing cases to support your work.



4. **Invest in personal contact.** Experience shows that personal contact has the strongest impact: if you have the option, always meet with your potential donor in person. Don't forget that people give to people, not to organisations. A personal contact with your donor increases the trust that they place in you and, in turn, the interest they have in supporting your work.
5. **Build relationships.** Fundraising is often a "friend-raising" exercise: build relationships that can last for a long time, to secure more regular funding than one-offs. Keeping existing donors is just as essential as finding new donors (and it often requires less effort!). Fundraisers have the responsibility to manage the development of relationships with each donor.
6. **Dare to ask.** If you don't ask you'll never have a response! But make sure you ask the right thing to the right person at the right time. Be proud and confident of your role: whether you succeed or not, never view yourself as a beggar. They are paying your organisation for the services it provides. Your goal is to bring people into the cause and enable them to make an important contribution: the donor is not being asked to give to you, but to the person(s) who will benefit from your work.
7. **Say thank you.** Acknowledge every donation with a friendly personalised message. Give large donors special treatment.
8. **Fundraising needs teamwork.** Fundraising is not something you can effectively do alone. Make sure you involve the right people from your organisation to help you fundraise and outline clear tasks and responsibilities among the team. It is important, when the human resources of an organisation allow for it, that someone is appointed to oversee and coordinate fundraising activities. This role will be responsible for coordinating a team that will undertake fundraising tasks. The fundraiser will champion all fundraising activities, maintain records, liaise with donors and keep them happy, and lead the planning, monitoring of progress and reporting.

9. **Always be honest, open and truthful with donors.** Share the problems as well as the successes.

It is important for the fundraising team to ensure two-way accountability with the staff working on activities and projects on the ground, to check on how the funds raised have been used and what has been achieved. This will help the fundraising team communicate clear targets and goals to donors, and build a sense of shared ownership of the work of the organisation.

Planning as the key element of successful resource mobilisation in Nouakchott, Mauritania

When a youth organisation in Mauritania decided to take action to clean up their city, they knew they could not do it alone. Mobilising resources from fellow community members was essential: they were hoping to mobilise volunteers but also to receive support to purchase the material needed for the clean-up. They worked on a plan to hold monthly community activities that involved citizens, businesses and local authorities. Some of the lessons learnt shared after a few rounds of resource mobilisation activities are that a proper detailed planning of the activities was essential to convince the community to join forces and donate their time or money: it wasn't easy to receive monetary donations, but the detailed plan of activities and resources needed ensured their success.

Read more here (French only): <https://www.changethegameacademy.org/examples/local-fundraising/view/?id=175>

Strategic planning

A strategic plan and an implementation plan need to be written down with milestones and indicators for monitoring progress and ensuring you remain on target. In the same way that you plan for a community activity, you must also have a plan for a fundraising activity.

A Fundraising Strategic Plan is a long-term plan that defines objectives, type and targets of fundraising actions. A Fundraising Implementation Plan (or Action Plan) follows the same cycle as a project implementation plan: it consists of context analysis, setting of “SMART” objectives (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound), planning of activities and budget needs.

Regular monitoring is important to keep the plan on track and to assess how well it is going. Alterations can be made to the plan during implementation depending upon your interim results. Preparing a strategy and a plan are important parts of building the fundraising team once it is appointed. Most small organisations do not have the capacity to have a dedicated fundraising team, so it becomes everyone’s shared responsibility.

Strategic planning cycle

Before starting to develop your fundraising strategic and implementation plans, you need to be sure you are ready to operate. Consider the two elements below:

1. **Get your organisation ready.** To be successful, the organisation must be legitimate, respected and trusted. The activities it does must be appreciated as having an impact on the most vulnerable and affected people. Is your organisation legally registered and certified to the authorities? If not, what makes it credible, well-regarded and positioned to engage in a popular cause? Do you have an organisational strategic plan or business plan?

2. **Get your fundraising needs ready.** You need to be armed with a good understanding of your fundraising goals that address the needs of the organisation, programmes and interventions to be funded. Have you identified who is accountable for fundraising and who is part of the fundraising team? Do you know how the funds will be used and accounted for? Have you reviewed the organisation’s history, traditional partners and competitors? Make sure you package your projects into manageable “asks” with different budgets.

Once this is set, you are ready to produce a fundraising plan and secure the budget required to implement it. You’ll plan your objectives and actions, how you will implement them and how you will monitor progress and evaluate results. The final step is recording lessons learnt to prepare for and improve the next round of fundraising planning.



Photo credit: Change the Game Academy

3. Understanding the donor

This section provides more insights in how to understand and engage with your donors. It is important to keep in mind the fundraising principles presented above and always apply them in your fundraising work.

Know your community and your donor

Local organisations must have a baseline information about the context in which they operate and the people they are going to ask support from. Who are the key leaders that have influence in your community? How do you engage with your current partners? Who are the main corporate organisations and private foundations? Are there funding opportunities accessible from other sources e.g. government schemes, or international organisations?

Once you have identified your main target, it is time to learn about them. Find out the interests of your donor: what causes are closer to their hearts? What have they supported before? What is the best way of approaching them? Young donors might prefer online communications and social media engagement, while older donors might respond better to letters or face-to-face interactions. In times of disaster many people may decide to give because the situation is compelling. With that comes passion and their desire to reach out to more groups who can drive the support in improving the lives of the most vulnerable communities.

Understanding the donors' motivation for giving is key to developing a lasting relationship with them. Most donors also try to check and balance the values to keep them motivated to give.



What would inspire a donor to support a cause?

Generally, local-level donors are inspired by a cause or programme that responds to the needs of communities and are scalable depending on the amount of funding received. They favour projects that are clearly defined in terms of scope and timeframe. Donors prefer the kind of fundraising wherein issues are founded on research and are backed up with information about the beneficiaries or communities at stake. Therefore, it is important to profile and survey the people who would benefit from the donation so that donors can know more about the people they would support.

Mobilising resources for resilience-building and disaster risk reduction can be particularly challenging. How can you “show” that your activities have prevented a disaster from occurring when it could have? It is important to keep this in mind when thinking about inspiring a donor to support you. You could consider showing a comparison of disaster impact before and after your intervention, or data and statistics about communities feeling safer or responding better to hazards.

Timing

Timing is an important consideration in approaching your donors. It is just as important as the message and the beneficiaries.

When approaching companies or institutions, make sure you know the grant timelines they operate with, so you can submit your request well in time. When approaching individuals, keep in mind special days, events and holidays so you can take advantage of moments that bring added incentives to donate. For example, in many countries November and December are “giving months” for non-profit organisations, as holidays such as Eid celebrations, Christmas or New Year’s instil a stronger sense of generosity in people than during the rest of the year. Alternatively, you can look for cause-related days, such as the International Day for DRR, World Water Day, Earth Day, International Day of Poverty, etc.

Engaging with donors

Donor engagement is an important donor retention strategy and an opportunity for donors to be more involved in the philanthropic decisions they make. Regular interaction with your donors allows your organisation or your cause to be at the top of their mind, therefore laying a good foundation for repeated giving.

Some steps to keep your donor engaged are:

- **Schedule a regular “check-in”.** Keep your donors’ interests up by providing updates on specific programmes they donated to or updates on your organisation. When you communicate, it is important to be specific. Your communication should connect the donor with what they have done for others. Showing them exactly how their donation is making a difference can help make the impact of their gift more tangible.
- **Share stories of impact.** Donors always want to know how their contribution helped solve a problem, uplifted lives, or made a difference in the community in tangible ways. Encourage beneficiaries to write their stories. An ideal beneficiary story is a story of one person or community whose life was made better through the grant support: use first names of beneficiaries to make it more personal and include clear photos or videos of the beneficiary engaged in supported activities. This will help donors visualise how their donation was spent.
- **Follow the “donor engagement lifecycle”.** Remember to thank donors promptly, no matter what the circumstances may be, and provide detailed information regarding the health of the organisation on an annual basis. Keep active on social media and send regular newsletters and mailings: this will encourage donors to stay involved, whether through site visits, event participation or volunteer opportunities. Remember to ask for another donation: never assume that the donor remembers that it is the “time of the year to give”.



Thank the donor

Always remember to say thank you to those who supported your organisation. It is ideal to send a thank you note to the donors within a few weeks of receipt of the donation. Inform the donor that their contribution has been received on time to show that their gift is valued and important. Delays in acknowledgements often cause donors to raise concerns.

Take time to customise the thank you message, and make sure that the message is personal, warm and authentic. First-time donors could be interested to know developments in the organisation: include an invitation to subscribe to the organisation's newsletter or other communications that show the progress of work. Develop a "Welcome Pack" for first-time donors, which could include brochures of the organisation and information about the programmes. Sometimes, handwritten notes or picking up the phone and telling donors how important their support is can make the organisation stand out from the crowd.

Build the donor's trust

Trust is the most important ingredient in sustaining and building a healthy relationship with donors. Here are some elements to keep in mind to build a donor's trust in you and your organisation.

- 1. Establish frequent contact.** An honest, truthful and meaningful communication will strengthen the relationship and ensure continued support from them.
- 2. Decision-making should be concrete and decisive.** The donor wants a concrete, viable, and tangible project. If you are not capable of doing something they expect, be honest because if the organisation cannot fulfil its commitment the donor might withdraw support.

- 3. Focus on the vision, mission and principles of the organisation you want to work with.** Give them concrete opportunities to fulfil their mission by supporting your project. Prove to them how you will be a loyal and genuine partner in delivering services to the people that need it on the ground.
- 4. Look forward to future engagements and do not think of short-term success.** This means that your first engagement of support from the donor is only part of a bigger contribution that might be extended when a bigger project is launched in the future. Guide the donors on how they will become active and effective participants in the activities of your organisation.

Document how the donation is used. If possible, it is always useful to organise a field visit with donors to the project areas where people benefitted from their contributions. This allows the donor to see tangible benefits and meet the people they supported.



Photo credit: GNDR



4. Mobilising resources with individuals and local companies

This section describes some practical ways to raise funds from individuals and companies at the local level. Key steps and potential activities are outlined and presented briefly. This is a summary of what the Change the Game Academy offers in their online trainings: templates and checklists are available online to guide you through the planning and implementation of fundraising activities.

In addition, the GNDR Secretariat and experienced members often share tips and guiding documents on GNDR's Community Platform, together with potential small, medium and large-scale funding opportunities.

Visit the Change the Game Academy website if you are interested in learning more about the activities presented here: <https://www.changethegameacademy.org/>

Visit the GNDR website to become a member (if you are not member already) and access the Community Platform, where you will learn more about fundraising experiences and opportunities: <https://gndr.org/members/join-us.html>

Mobilising resources with individuals

Local governments are mandated to implement disaster preparedness and risk reduction programmes. There are also local businesses, philanthropists, or wealthy individuals, who could help - if there is "something in it for them". Many of you will already rely on fundraising from within your own community. In almost all countries where civil society is encouraged and strong, by far the largest amount of funding is sourced from individuals, who contribute about 70% to 80% of all income donated to CSOs.⁴



While in the past individual donors were found mostly in high income countries, the trend has shifted in recent years, with more and more people donating in middle and lower income countries: the 2019 World Giving Index (produced by the Charities Aid Foundation) shows that in the past ten years, five of the top 10 countries that have seen an increase in individual donors are in Asia, with Indonesia leading the way.⁵ Tapping into the wealthy and the growing middle class individuals in many developing economies represents a huge potential in terms of local resource mobilisation. While richer groups tend to donate through philanthropic gifts and legacies, middle class groups' donations tend to be smaller in size, but often quite regular.

Targeting individuals can be a very effective fundraising technique with important side benefits: when individuals donate to a local organisation, the sense of community ownership increases, as well as the legitimacy of the activities being funded. In addition, individuals are often happy to commit to donating regularly for a longer term, if they feel their money is supporting projects that benefit their own community.

It is important to nurture the relationship with individual donors by acknowledging and showcasing their support. Remember that an organisation is more than just its paid staff! Volunteers, donors and people who engage with the organisation on social media are all supporting your work in one way or another.

Individuals can first engage with your organisation on a non-financial basis, volunteering some of their time or knowledge, or else by donating useful material. It is important to remember that these have the potential to become financial donors if they like your organisation's work. Non-monetary engagement is often a way for individuals to gain trust in the organisation before deciding to donate.

Fundraising techniques for individuals vary greatly. Here are some examples of successful techniques:

- **Events.** There is an endless range of events which can raise considerable funds if well-organised. This should balance the resources invested versus the expected gains, both social and economic. Examples of events commonly organised include cultural evenings such as theatre or concerts, charity dinners or lunches, and marathons. When fundraising for resilience-building, events can be connected to showcasing success, for example, with a community that effectively responded to heavy rains.
- **Face-to-face fundraising.** This method offers excellent opportunities to mobilise support and funding. However, it is a time-intensive way of mobilising support which, depending on the size of the gift you are planning to ask, can take some time to bring results.
- **Volunteering.** Volunteers can play a very important role in an organisation, bringing in extra time and expertise at far lower costs than when recruiting a member of staff. Volunteers can also assist in fundraising. Volunteering for disaster risk reduction and resilience-building can be a very effective way for individuals to “do something” for their community.
- **Online fundraising.** Online platforms for fundraising, such as crowdfunding, online giving platforms (e.g. JustGiving), mobile phones (via instant messaging) and social networks (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter), are booming. The advantages of e-giving include the speed, flexibility, low cost, wide outreach and online help that this type of fundraising provides. Online fundraising can be particularly effective in disaster response activities, when resources need to be made available quickly.
- **Crowdfunding.** This is a rapidly growing method of raising funds from individuals to fundraise for the cause's behalf. Its 'personal' touch appeals to people more than giving to impersonal brands. The rise of various crowdfunding sites means anyone can use it. Choosing the right platform is key: choosing one that

aligns with your type of work, sets an achievable target for a project, and communicates simply with your target audience is crucial.

- **Product and service sales.** You could consider forming a social enterprise to generate income by selling products and/or services provided by the organisation itself, by the beneficiaries or by the community. Selling products or services have the advantage that the buyers receive something tangible in return for their money and are reminded of the organisation when they use the product or service. Such community enterprises often make use of raw goods, waste products or untapped skills and resources to build local social and economic resilience.
- **Regular donations.** This approach links the donation to the regular support provided to an individual beneficiary (e.g. sponsoring a child) or a specific piece of work. It encourages people to give on a monthly or yearly basis. Regular small donations are important to establish a regular income. Through your website, social media and other marketing channels, ask your members, supporters and community to set up monthly direct debits and/or standing orders to support your organisation's work. Even a small donation given regularly each month, makes a big difference. Imagine 100, 1,000 or 10,000 monthly debits.
- **Telephone fundraising.** This is important for finding new donors, welcoming new donors, thanking existing donors and inviting them to increase or renew their contribution.
- **Diaspora fundraising.** Targeting people from a local community or a country who have migrated to other countries, who are often very involved and motivated to help, as well as often being economically in a better position. Targeting diaspora groups could be particularly effective to mobilise resources for resilience-building: family and friends of diaspora groups often share their experiences of disasters, instilling a wish to help that can be satisfied with a remote donation.

- **Legacy fundraising.** You can very sensitively ask if individuals would leave an amount of money or part of their possessions to your CSO in their Will when they pass away. Legacies are a rich source of long-term, unrestricted income for many social organisations, particularly those active in the field of health, children and culture.

An easy way to start fundraising with individuals is to first approach those already connected to your organisation: starting from the inside (with volunteers, social media supporters, etc.) is often a very successful way to start individual fundraising.

Alternatively, you could think of approaching those who show an interest in your work: reaching out to visitors with well-designed material that can be shown or given to them can foster their curiosity to learn more about your work. You could also consider “sparking” interest by getting publicity for your work on media channels or other channels for communication. Make sure your website is well maintained and up-to-date when you start your fundraising: this is a quick way for donors to see that your organisation is active and what projects you are currently working on!

Whether you start with those already connected to you or you go for people visiting your organisation, always take some time to think thoroughly about what you are going to ask them and how you'll ask. Remember: it's all about asking the right thing to the right person at the right time!

Once you start getting a pool of individual donors, make sure you keep records of their contributions, acknowledge them and leverage their engagement to reach out further to other potential individual donors. Importantly, ensure you keep an accurate and up-to-date database of who your individual donors are, how much and for how long they have donated.



Mobilising resources with companies

Companies can be a great asset for your organisation as they are often able to provide additional resources other than money. Research and experiences from local fundraisers show that there are companies willing to donate in every sector: you just need to find the right company for the type of work your organisation is doing.

Bigger companies would have specific policies on donating to civil society organisations, while smaller companies instead often act more impulsively or out of individual people's interests. When approaching bigger companies, you should consider they might have dedicated departments to deal with donations, longer processes and specific criteria for choosing who to donate to: establishing a personal contact will be a lot harder, but it may yield higher results in terms of the size of the donation.

Multinational companies will channel their donations under their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policies, which outline a more structured and planned way to engage with social causes. CSR donations are often less flexible, and more likely to be given to national-level organisations, rather than local level ones. There is a huge potential in multinational CSR plans, but there will be a much higher demand for reporting on how the donation is spent, and it makes the contribution more volatile as you may win the donation one time but not the next.

Fundraising techniques with companies involve requesting cash donations, as well as encouraging other ways of supporting one's work: they can provide in-kind support (by giving products or services), offer media attention or provide facilities. Employee volunteering is also often encouraged within companies. Here are some common fundraising techniques:

- Cash donations.** This is the most obvious contribution companies can make. They would want to give for a specific project and demand regular and transparent reporting. Companies very often start with a one-off donation before thinking of a longer partnership.
- Donations in-kind.** It may be easier for a company to donate some products or services than to give money. If the company has what you need, it will always be more attractive for it to give in-kind support rather than cash, and more difficult to refuse. You can consider companies who can provide services or materials for your resilience-building activities: this could include sirens for alert systems, mobile texting services for early warnings, venues for community meetings, supplies for disaster preparedness, etc.
- Employee volunteering.** Companies may organise volunteering activities for their staff in support of a social cause during working hours: this could be useful in terms of future funding or in terms of getting access to potential individual donors. As per individual volunteering, employee volunteering can be particularly effective in resilience-building fundraising: a group of employees from the same company could, for example, support activities such as training community members, setting up equipment for early warnings, etc.
- Employee fundraising.** Companies may enter into a partnership with an organisation, and commit all employees of that company to fundraise for and/or donate to the organisation.
- Advertising.** Companies might support an organisation by placing an advertisement in a brochure or in a publication like an annual report or a programme for a fundraising event. This form of giving is also known as "goodwill advertising".
- Sponsoring.** This support brings a return to the company. It is not simply a gift from a company, which is publicly acknowledged, but rather a binding agreement between two parties, each with different interests and different motives.
- Cause-related marketing.** This is a way of giving in which a company associates itself publicly with a non-profit organisation, with the intention to promote the company's products or services and to raise money for the non-profit at the same time.

- **Product partnerships.** Companies that sell products or services may enter into a partnership with an organisation whereby an established percentage of the products/services they sell goes to the organisation. This is often a way for the company to increase its profile as a “giving” entity and to tap into individuals’ generosity.

4. Forus Report 2019 “Funding Civil Society Organisations & Networks” (<http://forus-international.org/en/resources/71>)
5. Charities Aid Foundation World Giving Index 2019 (<https://www.cafonline.org/about-us/publications/2019-publications/caf-world-giving-index-10th-edition>)

Before approaching a company with a funding request, you need to clarify what your fundraising needs are. How much do you need? Do you need more than just money? Could an “in-kind” donation, such as the free use of a venue, address some of your needs?

Once you have a clear picture of your needs, spend some time identifying the most likely companies to give. Ask your contacts, tap on local knowledge and prioritise the ones to approach first. It is important that you know the company’s story: beyond the sector in which they operate, what is their CSR policy if they have one? In what ways could they support you, and are they already donating to other organisations? What are their values and mission, and do they align to yours? Make sure you are not partnering with a company whose product or service directly undermines the goals of your organisation! At the same time, make sure you know your story: practice explaining what your organisation does and how it operates in the simplest and clearest possible way. Don’t forget that resilience-building is an effort that will bring benefits to many companies: disaster risk is just as often a financial risk for businesses. Make sure the connection between disaster risk and a potential loss in profit is clear when you present your asks to local companies.

Once you have found the right match and are clear on what you will ask for, get ready to get in touch: prepare materials, show interest in the company’s work, and study the profile and responsibilities of the people you will approach.

Photo credit: Jjumba Martin/GNDR



5. Conclusion

In this how-to guide you have been introduced to some key elements of effective fundraising, in terms of plans to approach donors, engaging with them and maintaining relationships. Some common techniques to mobilise resources locally from individuals and companies were outlined, to serve as inspiration for your activities.

Change the Game Academy offers free online courses on local fundraising and mobilising support in order to strengthen the capacities of civil society organisations in those areas. This course material can also be accessed through face-to-face courses that CtGA offers around the world in a number of languages. Change the Game Academy has partners in twelve countries that implement the programme and strengthen the capacities of social change-makers to effectively raise funds and mobilise other forms of domestic support.


If you are a GNDR member, you will have access to funding opportunities and guidance documents shared on GNDR's Community Platform.⁶ You can also reach out to any other GNDR member if you would like to learn more from the activities of a specific member organisation.

If you are an experienced local fundraiser, we would like to hear from you! We are looking for case studies and examples of local resource mobilisation to support this how-to guide with stories of these methods being put in practice. Contact us via GNDR's Community Platform, or via email at info@changethegameacademy.org and info@gndr.org.

6. <https://community.gndr.org/s/>

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