

1. Events

Organising an event is a proven method to mobilise funds and support for a cause. Many organisations who engage in fundraising for the first time, choose to run an event. The range of event types is sheer endless and new, creative events are invented every day. One can raise a lot of funds with an event that is well organised, but should balance the resources invested versus the expected gains. It is wise not to choose a one-off event, but to select or develop one that can become a recurring activity (e.g. annually). Thus, the experience of the organisers and public awareness can grow by repetition and very often profits will grow as well.

Examples

- *Walkathon* - walking or running where participants are sponsored by their network of families, friends and co-workers
- *Charity dinner, lunch* - either low cost for community members or high-price and exclusive for wealthy individuals
- *Cultural evening* - music, dance, theatre, storytelling
- *School rally*

Pre-conditions – external

- Adherence to any regulations from local authorities for public events

Pre-conditions –internal

- Having good network relations to facilitate the mobilisation of sponsors, artists etc.
- Having good media relations to generate publicity and promote the event

What you need

- A good cost-benefit analysis: it is important not only to consider the potential gains of an event and make a realistic assessment of these, but also to consider the investment (in money, time etc.) and carefully examine any risks
- A risk mitigation plan: what to do, for instance, if there is a security issue
- A person or (volunteer) team (depending on the scale of the event) to coordinate and prepare the event
- For bigger events: an organiser experienced in events management (internal, volunteer or hired)
- A clear and tested system for receipt, registration and follow-up of donations; thank-you to donors and option for renewal of gift.

Risks

- Due to its incidental nature, a big event can be a big burden on the organisation's human resources
- Things can go different from what was initially planned and results can be disappointing
- If the budgeted amount to be raised is not realised you can end up with a much lower net profit than expected or even a net loss
- Unexpected weather conditions, like heavy rains, can influence the number of people who show up and thus lead to a lower income, or even make it necessary to cancel the event
- If an event goes 'wrong', this may result in negative publicity

2. Personal solicitation

Meeting potential individual donors face to face offers excellent opportunities to mobilise support and funding. After all, personal contact has a stronger impact than any other form of communication. Personal solicitation 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 before the relationship and trust have developed to the stage where you can make the ask.

Examples

- Inviting a donor to visit your organisation or project
- Having a meeting with the donor at his or her home
- Presenting a case with direct personal follow-up at a meeting

Pre-conditions – external

- A pool of potential individual donors who could be interested to support your cause, preferably with a relatively affluent profile

Pre-conditions –internal

- People, or at least someone, with strong social skills, who are, or is, able and willing to ‘sell’ the organisation, who dare, or dares, to make the ask and who can adapt to the donor or public at hand
- Commitment and support of board and management to share and make introductions to their personal network

What you need

- A plan, including which people to approach, with an attractive proposition, clear message and motivation to give
- Good public speakers (a team or volunteers) and a good elevator pitch
- Strong visual aid materials (to use when you present your case and/or to leave behind)
- Some donors who have already given and who are prepared to give brief testimonies (in your materials) as to why they choose to support your cause, why it matters to them personally and how they feel about your organisation
- Careful follow-up and feedback to the people who have provided you with their network contacts

Risks

- Usually, the risks are manageable, because the small scale of personal solicitation makes it easier to monitor and adjust the approach. However:
 - If relations developed through the network of the organisation’s leadership are not well managed, it can impact on the leaders themselves and on the team

3. Network fundraising

Network fundraising or Friendraising means that you approach new donors through your own networks and contacts. A 'friend-to-friend' approach works like an inkblot and can be used almost everywhere. This method is especially effective if you cooperate with so called 'connectors', meaning people who know a lot of other people and people who are well known and respected in their community and who are prepared to spread the message amongst their network. But any existing donor or other well-wisher can also be a good source to bring in new donors. You can also involve the own staff and board members of an organisation to promote the cause. People are more easily inclined to give when directly asked by a person they know and respect rather than when asked by a stranger.

Network fundraising can be done through social media such as Facebook, through e-mailing or through personal contact. This way of fundraising can be done by any organisation but works especially well when an organisation has good contacts with journalists, the media and/or a large group of followers.

Examples

- Organise an e-mailing campaign for staff members: prepare an e-mail, which can easily be adapted and forwarded by staff to friends and relatives, which shortly describes what the organisation is doing and how people can get involved
- When organising an event, encourage existing donors to bring some friends to the event. The more attractive your event, the more easy it is for others to convince friends to come along

Pre-conditions –internal

- Support for and confidence in the approach exists among board, management and staff
- At all these levels, there is willingness to make time for the execution of the plan

What you need

- To map the existing network of the organisation
- To develop a strategy and plan whom to approach and how to approach them
- To develop suitable communication materials that can easily be shared (examples are e-mails, letters and leaflets) and have a clear ask for support

Risks

- As personal relationships are of great value for people, in case of damage of this relationship, the relationship with the organisation might also suffer

4. Online fundraising

Over the past ten years, fundraising via online media has literally exploded. However, we know that some continents and countries have a much stronger access to the internet than others. But it is undeniable that almost everywhere in the world the situation is changing quite rapidly. This technological transformation creates a vast potential for fundraising via online giving platforms (e.g. JustGiving), mobile phones (via InstantMessaging (I)) and social networks (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter). The evident advantages of e-giving are the speed, flexibility, low cost, wide outreach and online help that this type of fundraising provides. Often, online fundraising is combined with other types of off-line, live activities, such as events.

Examples

- Crowdfunding through social media and/or social networks

Pre-conditions – external

- Infrastructure is available where a target audience of sufficient size has access to internet and/or mobile phones
- Safe online payment options are available

Pre-conditions –internal

- (Internal) expertise on how to develop and execute an online fundraising campaign
- A relatively broad existing donor base and network that is familiar with and active in online activities
- Computer software (website, database, possibly a webshop)

What you need

- A strong idea and a solid plan on what kind of campaign you want to run
- A team of digital natives helps a lot - volunteers or staff that are social media savvy (those who understand how to effectively use social media, mobile phones and the online environment)
- Names and emails of current and/or potential donors
- Effective communication materials to follow up on the online giving (thank you mails, updates on the results achieved, etc.)

Risks

- Viruses and hackers can detour the flow of money, therefore: purchase systemic software and sound systems to protect your organisations and your donors

5. Volunteering

Volunteers can play a really important role in an organisation, bringing in extra time and expertise at far lower costs than when recruiting a member of staff. At the headquarters, volunteers can be used for general help around the office with their expertise or provide a particular service. Volunteers can also assist in fundraising. Many organisations also mobilise volunteers for (part of) the implementation of their programmes. There are some costs involved in using volunteers though, as volunteers need supervision and compensation for expenses e.g. travel.

Examples

- Students from a college help to organise a fundraising event
- A retired bank employee contacts local companies and shops to get prizes donated for a raffle
- A retired teacher visits schools to promote the cause
- A lawyer gives free legal advice
- A website specialist gives a one week consultancy
- A financial expert helps set up a sound financial system
- A karate teacher provides karate lessons to beneficiaries
- A professional counsellor provides free counselling to beneficiaries

Pre-conditions –internal

- Staff that can make time to manage and supervise volunteers

What you need

- A list of tasks and activities that need to be done and that are suitable for being done by volunteers, both within the organisation and for activities with the beneficiaries
- A plan on whom to approach, how to approach them and how to manage them
- To agree clear terms and conditions of what a volunteer is expected to do and can expect from the organization
- A proper briefing of volunteers about the organisation and the tasks they are expected to perform
- Ways of recognising the work of volunteers

Risks

- Harm can be done if volunteers working with vulnerable groups of beneficiaries, like young children, are not carefully selected and screened.
- A volunteer does not deliver what he or she promised, with the result that tasks are not being finished on time and/or with the right quality

6. Donations in kind

Apart from money, support in kind can be a very good additional way of mobilising resources needed for the organisation and its cause. Many people are more willing to contribute donations in kind than to give money. This applies to individuals as well as companies.

Examples

- A lady living in the neighbourhood of the project provides a sack of rice
- The local Rotary Club organises a collection of clothes for the beneficiaries
- Students provide note books and pencils for the children in the project
- A computer company donates computers for computer literacy lessons
- A local shopkeeper provides afternoon snacks
- A local company or community building provides a meeting room or office space

Pre-conditions –internal

- Staff or volunteers who are able to organise the support
- Transparency statement on the uses of the donations

What you need

- A list of materials, supplies or services you need for the organisation and/or its beneficiaries
- A plan whom to approach, how to approach them and how to collect the goods
- Logistics for distribution of the support in kind to beneficiaries (if applicable)

Risks

- The chance that you end up with products that are not working properly
- The chance that you end up with products that do not fit your needs

7. Raising money from young people and in schools

Raising resources from young people and in schools goes hand in hand and should always be connected with the objective to get them to understand the work of the organisation. Children are likely to have time rather than money, but they also have access to the support of their family. Fundraising with young people will foremost involve young people in the cause and lay an important base for future support.

Examples

- A school organising a sponsor run in which parents, family and friends sponsor the children
- A musical performance of school children in which they ask a small entrance fee that will be donated to your cause
- Collecting and recycling waste materials, the profits going to your cause
- Young people distributing invitations to your event in the neighbourhood

Pre-conditions –external

- There are schools in the area of your project or organisation

Pre-conditions –internal

- The cause is appealing to children

What you need

- An original idea on how to involve children in the cause which is fun and educational
- Good contacts with schools in the neighbourhood
- Volunteers that can help in working with schools
- Information material such as a simple pamphlet, booklet or poster that is attractive and interesting for the children

Risks

- Time investment is too large in relation to the obtained results

8. Periodic donation through adoption of a project

Recruiting regular donors is a proven method to keep donors involved for a long period of time. This approach links the donation to the support of an individual beneficiary or a specific piece of work. It encourages people to give on a monthly or yearly basis. Donors continue to give for a long time when they feel due to an emotional connection and when their involvement is nurtured in a good way. This way of giving works best with existing donors. Periodic donations are the most durable and stable source of income: the most effective way to fund an organisation!

Examples

- Sponsor the education of a child
- Sponsor a meal for a homeless person
- A 'become a friend of ...' program in which a donor gives money every month or annually

Pre-conditions –external

- The public has to be familiar with this way of giving
- A payment mechanism has to be in place to enable donations to be paid regularly

Pre-conditions –internal

- The cause is emotionally appealing
- The cause is recognisable and has a clear developmental perspective

What you need

- Appealing examples of recognizable people, personal stories and testimonials
- Concrete options for support that clearly show the impact of each giving option
- Regular feedback to the donors in order to ensure their continuous support
- Making it easy for the donors to give on a regular basis
- A good donor database (system) to ensure a swift and efficient way of staying in touch with your donors

Risks

- Inventing fake stories that do not comply with the facts is disastrous for the image of the organisation and may damage its reputation for years
- Restricted funding to a sponsorship, a child or project

9. Collections

Collections can be a successful strategy to raise funds when you can mobilise enough people who want to do the collecting. There are different kind of collections:

- Collections in churches and amongst the local community
- House-to-House collections, where a person visits homes and asks for support
- Street collections, where collectors ask people on the streets to donate
- Collection boxes in shops, companies or at public places
- Collection boxes at the homes of supporters of an organisation

The strength of a collection is that over time one can reach a very large audience. Apart from raising funds a collection can also have an impact in terms of awareness creation and publicity for a cause

Examples

- A collection box in local shops in the community
- A collection box in a hotel close to the organisation
- A collection box in a shop or hotel in a big city, owned by someone originating from the area where the organisation works

Pre-conditions –external

- Approval from the authorities and/or the owners of a location
- Cooperation with a bank in order to process the cash money
- Safety for the collectors to collect

Pre-conditions –internal

- The organisation is known by the public or the cause collected for is easy to explain
- A voluntary pool of collectors and coordinators of the collections
- A well working administrative system to process the collected funds
- Good connections to companies or other places where you want to place a collection box

What you need

- A well-structured and reliable system for collecting funds (proper authorisation of collectors, clear procedures for money counting, transfer and administration)
- Collection materials: theft-proof containers/boxes or envelopes, promotional materials such as leaflets and stickers

Risks

- As this fundraising instrument involves cash money, there is a larger risk of theft and fraud, which can harm your image as an organisation
- Fundraising is based on building relationships, and collections don't allow to register the donor information

10. Product sales

This involves the sales of products from which a (preferably large) share of profits goes to the organisation. You can think of products made by the organisation itself, by the beneficiaries of the organisation, by the community, or those produced 'in license' and sold through commercial channels. Product sales have the advantage that the buyers receive something tangible in return for their money and that they are reminded of the organisation when they use the product.

On the other hand it can be a financially risky enterprise that requires a very different skillset from an organisation. Thorough research, knowledgeable partners and starting small-scale are therefore advisable

Examples

- Selling of greeting cards or other products that are made by the beneficiaries of the organisation
- A small market sale with homemade food such as cakes, cookies, breads, etc.
- Sale of products donated by various sponsors

Pre-conditions –external

- A public which is interested and willing to buy the products

Pre-conditions –internal

- People in the organisation and/or volunteers that have expertise and experience

What you need

- A good idea that resonates with the potential buyers
- A plan, including a budget
- Preferably find sponsors that can cover the production costs in order to make the profit as high as possible

Risks

- Risk of losses because of goods failing to sell or over-optimistic production
- Low return on investment: the buyer donates a one-off donation, which is less efficient than regular donations