
FUNDRAISING IDEAS

Namaste!

The following has been put together to assist you in your fundraising efforts. There are also many websites available now that share ideas for free. Some are listed below, but you can try doing an online search for more details.

If you provide VSN with the email addresses for those who have made a donation, we will be happy to put them on our newsletter distribution list. This way they can also be kept up to date with all that VSN is involved with.

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How to Get Started

The important thing to remember about fundraising is that asking for money is not 'begging' for money. Those who donate do so because they often want to have the sense that they are part of a 'good cause' or 'something bigger' than themselves. The key to making sure that your potential donors understand and feel that they are needed is to provide tangible means of 'proving' their assistance. In other words, all donors should get something in return, whether that be a thank you card, added to the VSN Newsletter distribution list, or a general feeling that they are part of a worthwhile cause. Making sure they feel their place is acknowledged and important is the key to fundraising effectively.

Establishing a Target Market

In order to establish those most likely to donate to your cause ask yourself these three questions:

1. Who do you believe will care most about what you are doing or what you have been involved with?
2. Where are these types of people most likely to be?
3. How can you motivate them to care about your cause?

Example answers to these questions include:

1. Friends and family will almost certainly take an active interest in your plans. Also, philanthropists, parents, travellers and educators may be interested in helping you to raise funds for a children's home.
2. You can locate these people at family functions, at home, schools, colleges, place of work, churches, and associations/clubs etc.
3. You can motivate these people by showing them how motivated/dedicated you are to the cause. You can also educate them about your cause and through education, inspire them to help you in your efforts to raise money.

Have a Fundraising Work Plan

Make a list of 100 people you know. Include everyone you can think of eg family, friends, old neighbours, high school sweethearts, former teachers or coaches, your doctor, your dentist, family attorneys, high school and college alumni, vendors, restaurateurs or other professionals you have patronised on a regular basis. List your parent's friends, members of civic clubs, religious affiliations, boards or organisations to which you, a friend or family member may belong.

Examine all the possibilities and rate them on a scale from 1 to 5:

The 'ones' are the people you know well and the 'fives' are your acquaintances. Ask the 'ones' and 'twos' to furnish the names and addresses of 2 to 5 people they know who might be interested in your volunteer work. Ask them if they will contact their friend first on your behalf, or if they will introduce you.

Be educated about the cause:

Becoming educated and educating others about the problems and issues surrounding destitute and orphaned Nepali children is the key to motivating yourself and your potential donors. Indeed, the way to make a fundraiser successful and memorable is to create a fundraiser that raises awareness about the issue. People are more willing to help you achieve your goal if they understand the goal.

Make it convenient for them to give you money:

The more flexible you are, the more money you can make. Whatever you do, get a commitment for payment rather than a promise and where possible, money in advance of your event, as this will save you a lot of time and also ensures you receive your donation. Rather than asking for sponsorship if you achieve your goal, ask for a donation towards your efforts, this way you are guaranteed the money whether you are successful in your event or not. If possible set up a separate bank account just for your fundraising efforts and give people the details.

Give incentives or premiums:

Even when you are fundraising for a good cause, it is beneficial to offer creative incentives in return. For most people contributing money, it's often recognition and praise they want. Write a thank you letter which includes a printed list of your donor's names. Offer them the opportunity to be placed on the quarterly VSN newsletter mailing list.

Remember, often the prime motivation for giving is how it makes the giver feel, not how it makes the receiver feel. Hopefully, your supporters will feel good each time they receive a VSN newsletter.

Give an educational presentation:

Give a talk or slide show of your volunteer experience in Nepal as this can be a great way to secure funding from religious organisations, civic groups, alumni associations and educational institutions. Tangible evidence of your actions abroad helps people 'see' where their dollars have gone.

Expand your base and build your network:

The more contributions the better! Your fundraising resource pool is limited only to the number of people you can contact. To increase the volume of your contributions it is necessary to expand beyond your inner circle of close friends and immediate family members.

Do it!

In order to be successful in your fundraising efforts, make it fun and keep it simple! Simple fundraising ideas that don't require a huge amount of organisational time and financial outlay will bring you the greatest rewards. Fundraising is hard work, but a lot of fun and very rewarding and opens up opportunities to meet a whole new set of people from amazing and diverse backgrounds. If you follow the advice in this 'Fundraising Ideas' guide you should be able to substantially increase your fundraising success. Good Luck!!

Ways to Raise Funds

1. Email friends and relatives

One of the most effective ways to do grassroots fundraising is through an email campaign. Write to as many relatives, friends, former teachers and professors, former co-workers, etc as possible. You should try to send an email to 100 or more people. You may want to break your potential supporters into two, three or more groups, sending a custom email to each group, based on your relationship with them, or the amount of money you are asking for.

If you send out 100 emails asking for \$50 on average, and one-half respond, you have raised \$2,500. Often a few people will be very inspired by what you are doing and may give much more.

2. Use social media

Use social media to inform people of your fundraising initiative and encourage them to spread the word as far and wide as possible. Include photos of your own fundraising events and the project you're supporting. Provide links directly to VSN so your prospective donors can see for themselves who you are raising money for.

3. Form a support group

One of your best support structures is to create a fundraising committee that consists of your friends and family. Have them write letters/emails on your behalf and distribute donation forms to their co-workers, immediate family and good friends. The best fundraisers have even gone as far as to officially organise something like 'The Committee to Send Julie to Nepal' - which is personal and shows you have not only established an organised support structure, but also managed to inspire others. This adds credibility to your efforts to raise funds. By involving others you not only spread your reach, but reduce your personal workload.

4. Online Fundraising

Online fundraising is a great way to raise money for your chosen project. There are now many crowdraising platforms eg gofundme or Global Giving. Some are country specific, others more generic. Once you have launched your page all you have to do is share your page link with your friends, family and greater network via email and social media.

5. Organise a 40-hour famine or run an Eat So They Can dinner party

This is a great way to raise awareness about the nutritional issues in Nepal, especially among the very young while raising money at the same time. Have friends and family pledge to donate so much money for each of the 40 hours you fast. Choose a weekend and fast (while drinking plenty of water and juice of course). Please see www.worldvision.com for more information about organising a 40-hour famine for yourself and/or a group of people. Alternatively organise an Eat So They Can dinner party, tagging the funds for SSCH VSN. For further details www.eatsotheycan.org

6. Have a rummage sale or garage sale

A rummage or garage sale is a good way to sell dated possessions and gather support for your cause. Advertise what the sale of your goods will benefit. An old shirt suddenly becomes attractive when a client realises their money will be donated to a good cause.

You may also want to combine a raffle at the site of the sale, or an auction, especially if there is a natural group that would support you in this endeavour (fraternity, sorority, workplace, church, club, etc).

7. Cake Bakes

Get your family and friends to bake some cakes for you and take them to your place of work, worship, study etc and sell them during a break time.

8. Quiz Night

See if your local pub / social club / village hall will provide you with a venue free of charge and organise a quiz night. Publicise your event throughout your local community and encourage teams to register prior to the event. Approach local businesses, shops, restaurants etc for prizes for the event.

9. Bag Packing

Approach your local supermarket and ask if you and a group of friends can do some bag packing for customers over a weekend. Go supplied with donation buckets and information about the cause you are collecting for.

10. Dress down / up days

Organise a dress down / up day at your place of work or study and set a minimum donation for all participants. Advertise your event well ahead of time via posters, internal emails, announcements, company newsletter etc to ensure a good uptake.

11. Organise a Daal Bhat Dinner

This is great fun and links directly back to your experience in Nepal. Buy in bulk so as to reduce your costs and set a minimum price to attend. Create a slideshow of your Nepal experience and have Nepali music playing in the background. If possible banish knives and forks, and get everyone to eat with their hands! Check out our daal bhat recipes to make it easy for you.

12. Add and extra \$1

Ask you local hairdresser or favourite restaurant to add \$1 to each bill, one day a week (with the customer's permission of course). Create a poster to advertise this and explain a little about the cause the money will be supporting.

13. In house charity shop party

Get your get all your friends and family to go through their wardrobes for stuff they no longer want/wear and to have a Charity Shop party at home whereby, all the items are priced up as per a charity shop and you have a great evening playing dressing up and hopefully getting some bargains along the way!

14. Local business

Local businesses are far more likely to support you than large corporations. The key is to make a linkage between the owner of the business and you, or someone close to you. You may want to approach the business with a letter first, enclosing all relevant materials and a pledge form and then follow up with a phone call. Asking for \$100 or more is not unusual.

15. Match funding

See if you can find a local business or charitable organisation such as your local Lion or Rotary club to match fund whatever you manage to raise yourself.

16. Special collection

Take up a special collection at a religious service or a general meeting of other community groups; coordinate with the proper ministers/organisation officers. It is important to educate the community about what you are doing before the collection is announced. Write a letter for the bulletin or make an official and preferably personal appeal during the service/meeting.

You could also make a collection tin to take to yours and other members of your family and friends schools, colleges, places of work etc.

17. Approach your local place of worship

Go to your local church, synagogue or mosque councils directly and ask for a specific amount (\$300-\$1000) in exchange for a talk, slide show about Nepal.

18. Community groups

Civic groups such as Rotary, Lions, Elks, certain Unions, special interest groups (like the Sierra Club or Returned Peace Corps Volunteers) might be interested in sponsoring you, especially if you can give them a special presentation about your experience as a volunteer in Nepal.

19. Get a part-time job

Getting an easy part-time job (like house-sitting, lawn mowing, plant watering) can earn you extra money without unduly cutting into your time.

20. Support from employer and co-workers

Approaching your own employer is an often over-looked source of possible support. It is even better to get support from your co-workers.

21. Letters to alumni associations

An announcement in a high-school or college alumni newsletter about your time in Nepal, with a pitch for contributions, can be a good way to gain more support and touch base with long lost friends.

22. Have a fundraising party

There are hundreds of ways to throw a fundraising party - just make sure you end up earning money, not losing it. It is usually best to charge a flat fee for the party and provide beverages and food free. Have people RSVP so that you have a good idea how much you will make before the party starts. Offering Nepali food and drink is an easy way to tie your party into the theme of your fundraiser and daal bhaat is a cost effective meal that can be easily created for a large number of people.

You may want to combine a raffle with the party to earn extra money. Sell raffle tickets ahead of time and insist that people show up in order to win. Or you could try a silent auction, possibly of Nepali handicrafts you have brought back with you or good quality photos you have snapped of your time in Nepal.

23. 'Steal the gate' at a popular night spot

Try to get the owner of a hot night spot to give you a certain percentage - or even all - of the cover charges for the night, in return guarantee a larger than usual crowd. More people will end up buying more drinks,

etc, at regular prices. This is best done in conjunction with a popular band, a guest speaker or something to convince the owner that there will indeed be a large turnout.

This works not only with nightclubs or bars, but with community events such as the horse races or local fair.

24. Make a winning event yours

Approach the sponsoring organisation of a successful local event (well ahead of time) and ask them to focus on a theme that relates to the project you are trying to raise funds for. They can then arrange for a portion of the proceeds to go to your fundraiser (examples include local duck races, 40 hour famines, marathons, races, etc).

25. Duck races

Ask people to buy rubber ducks with the chance to win certain donated prizes (sell each duck for a marked up price: \$10). Advertise the money earned from these ducks will go towards helping children in Nepal. Then plan a day when all the ducks will be allowed to 'swim' down a local river. Those ducks that reach the finish line first will be returned to their owner along with their prize.

26. Ask schools for help

School children in your district would probably be interested in helping impoverished school children in Nepal. Asking for their fundraising support would be advantageous for you but you would also have the opportunity to educate young people about another part of the world. Give them ideas about how they can help, e.g. a dress down day, cake bake, collecting change in a sock, sponsored walk etc.

You could offer to have an educational meeting in which you teach school children about any number of issues. You could focus Nepal from a geographical or historical perspective. You could speak about poverty and famine in relation to Nepali children.

27. Run a mini-marathon or participate in a triathlon

Enlist sponsors for each part completed.

28. Donation jar

Ask a local friendly business if you could leave a donation jar at the counter. Spare change adds up.

29. Write to your local senator/MP

Perhaps he/she will be inspired to help. People in government love to hear about interesting things their constituents are doing.

30. Keep a loose change pot

Ask your friends and family (5-10 people) to save all their loose change for a specified period of time. Once the time is up, gather together for a 'change counting party.' Let them know their 'change is changing the world.'

31. Cash in lieu of presents

In place of birthday presents or Christmas presents ask for donations.

32. Do a special event with a famous person

If you know a celebrity and/or feel that you can ask a celebrity to do a special event (concert, stand-up comedy etc) this can be a good way to raise money. Make sure that they are willing to charge you very little, if anything at all, and then charge an entrance fee and invite everyone you know to the event.

If the celebrity is willing you could also auction off 'celebrity experiences' (dinner with the famous person etc) or 'celebrity items', personal items that they have donated.

33. Quit smoking / biting your nails / driving fast, etc for a promised donation

Tell your friends and family that you will quit whatever behaviour they hate, or that would be difficult for you to stop, for an agreed donation at the end of 30 days. Promise them that if you fail to meet the agreed goal in 30 days you will match their donation.

34. Small business newsletter

If you know a small business owner, or even if you don't, ask if you can include a 'plea' letter in their monthly newsletter. Include your contact details and desired donation goal.

35. Small groups donations

Ask your friends, who are members of small groups (bible study, service clubs, book clubs, Women's Institute) to explain the purpose of your donation request at their next meeting and pass around a donation jar.

36. Negotiate a percentage of profits from a local business

Similar to 'Steal the Gate' have a local business offer to donate a percentage of its profits on a specified day (an Irish bar could donate 2% of its profits on St. Patrick's Day). Promise the business owner you will get as many people as you can to their business on the specified day.

37. Charge for your skills

Determine your skills/experience and offer to teach others for a fee. If you can speak French, give French lessons. If you are an accounting wizard offer to give seminars to people who struggle with accounting etc.

38. Pie the teacher

Children can pay for a chance to pie an authority figure. You can also turn it into a raffle, the winning ticket gets to 'pie the teacher'!

Some of these ideas have come from:

- Kim Klein's Grassroots Fundraising Journal http://www.grassrootsfundraising.org/howto/v15_n1_art03.pdf
- Visions in Action

For more ideas on fundraising you can also visit the following:

<http://www.how2fundraise.org/>

<http://www.volunteer.org.nz/resources/fundraising/>

<http://www.fundraising-ideas.org/DIY/index.html>

<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/5658/fundraisingideas.html>

<http://www.easy-fundraising-ideas.com/>

<http://www.fundraiserhelp.com/fundraising-ideas.htm>

Writing a Fundraising Letter

Asking for donations can be very difficult. This article will help make the process easier by helping you to write a successful fundraising letter.

Write your fundraising letter so your readers will want to give from genuine caring rather than from pressure or guilt.

1. **Get the reader's attention.** This section is optional, but it can be very effective if not overdone. Include pleasantries and address the reader as if you were talking to a friend.
2. **State the cause** and/or credentials of your charitable organisation. This section is absolutely essential and should be the longest part of your fundraising letter. Use about 150 words in this section. You should clearly identify a critical need. Explain how your organisation can effectively address that need.
3. **Solicit a contribution.** This is another required section. This part of the fundraising letter should be concise and to the point – about 30 to 50 words. List the benefits of supporting the cause and then ask for a specific donation amount. Explain to the potential donor how much charitable contributions in this amount have helped your cause in the past, but that the need is still great.
4. **An incentive offer.** This section can be optional, but it provides a reason for the reader to act now. The incentive you offer could be a tangible gift with a substantial perceived value, or it could be intangible. For example: "Imagine the feeling you'll get, knowing you have helped an underprivileged child learn how to read....".
5. **Additional insert.** This is another optional section. If you can afford another page you can use photographs or other evidence to help validate your point and keep the reader's interest longer. Be sure to refer to the insert in your fundraising letter.

6. **Thank you.** A statement of gratitude is polite and subtly assumes that the contribution will be made. Express gratitude for the reader's generosity and for having taken the time to consider your very important cause.
7. **Conclusion.** Be courteous and friendly. Wish the reader well and leave a positive feeling in his/her mind regarding your needy cause.
8. **Sign the letter.** You want the reader to know the request is coming from a real person, not an impersonal organisation.

We hope you now have a positive feeling about writing your own fundraising letter. You will know that you have written an effective one by the generous number of contributions you receive in response! For examples of fundraising letter templates, check out <http://www.how2fundraise.org/generic-tools/>

There are so many other options for fundraising, too many to mention here, but a little further research will produce unlimited ideas – you are only limited by your imagination. Whatever you do in your fundraising efforts, we hope you have fun and good luck. If you need any help or information, please feel free to contact kate@vsnpjects.org