

FUNDRAISING IDEAS

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 is 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 (orphanage).
2. You can locate these people at family functions, at home, schools, colleges, place of work, churches, associations/clubs and humanitarian organisations (Red Cross, Save the Children, 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: 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. Ask them to fill out a sponsorship form and then get back to them at a designated time. If they tell you "I'll send you the cheque when I get paid," chances are you will never see the money. 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!

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. Send an email with the 'SSCH Dreaming of a New Home' PowerPoint presentation attached and include what you hope to accomplish through your participation. Ask for a specific amount of money - \$50 is a nice round figure, but for older, more established relatives and friends \$100 is much more appropriate; for peers and fellow students, perhaps \$25 to \$35. 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. 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 pledge 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 China' - which is personal, catchy 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.

3. Organise a 40-hour famine

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.

4. 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).

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. Canvassing

Canvassing is a non profit word for door-to-door solicitation. This is a tough one, but it is the backbone of groups such as SANE, Freeze and Greenpeace. If you are positive, likable, not-easily-discouraged and can identify a neighbourhood that is safe and identifies closely with you, or has many liberally minded, well-off people, this may be worth a try.

Have something to show and at the very least leave them with information, such as the VSN brochure, and the opportunity to send something to you later. The key here is to strike up a conversation, get them interested in what you are doing and then ask for a specific amount of money (such as \$20).

13. Sell something door to door

The traditional candy or biscuit sale can work if you price your goods accordingly (mark everything up). Volunteers with artistic abilities can produce their own items (t-shirts, mugs, pins, etc) to sell, but you should always try to calculate appropriately the sale price in relation to the cost of the materials and the time you spent making and selling your products.

If you are a very creative person, with extra time, you could replicate certain Nepali goods. You could produce items such as jewellery and wool clothing. These items could also be sold at a fair or similar event. By modelling them you are tying them into the theme of your fundraiser and educating others.

14. Telephone campaign

Getting permission to call a friendly membership list can be tricky, but if you are successful in persuading a group to let you call their members, this can be an effective fundraising tool, especially if the group shares something with you (alumni, international development, religious, etc).

15. 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.

16. '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.

17. 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).

18. Sell progressive T-shirts, buttons, etc

If you want to increase awareness about poverty and illiteracy in developing countries you could locate a deal on related T-shirts, buttons, headbands, stickers, etc and then sell these items at a busy place (a college campus, a mall or supermarket, a peace rally). Doing this you will accomplish four things at once: inform people about what you are doing, gain more sponsors, earn extra cash and promote your cause.

19. 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.

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.

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

Enlist sponsors for each part completed.

21. Donation jar

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

22. 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.

23. 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.'

24. Investing

If you have a donor who is particularly wealthy ask that they invest a large sum of money (\$10,000) and then give you the interest earned.

25. Cash in lieu of presents
In place of birthday presents or Christmas presents ask for donations.
26. 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.
27. 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.
28. 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.
29. Small groups donations
Ask your friends, who are members of small groups (bible study, service clubs, book clubs, sororities) to explain the purpose of your donation request at their next meeting and pass around a donation jar.
30. 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.
31. 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.
32. Match donations
Offer to match the donations of your friends/family or at least a % of the donations. To encourage donations, throw a party and then during a specified time announce that you will match all donations up to a certain amount eg, 'I will match all donations made up to \$200 for the next 10 minutes.'
33. 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.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>

http://www.nspcc.org.uk/getinvolved/raisemoney/guidetofundraising/a_zoffundraising_wdf33538.pdf

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.