

# Fundraising from groups

**Aim:** This document provides an overview of the potential for raising funds from organised groups in your local area. It covers the different types of groups that exist, how to research the groups in your area, how to approach them and how to keep the relationship going.

# Fundraising from Groups

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The great thing about fundraising with groups is that the relationships you develop will significantly increase your grass roots, local support. By finding the right approach for each group, you could involve a whole bunch of people in your work in one go.

## Types of groups:

Think about your community, and what kinds of groups exist, for example:

- Membership organisations: Rotary clubs, Lions clubs, Women's groups
- Sports clubs: Golf clubs, tennis clubs, football clubs
- Hobby groups: Bridge clubs, gardening clubs, reading groups, bird watching groups
- Special Interest groups: Caravanning clubs
- Youth groups: Youth clubs, scout groups
- Schools and Parent-Teacher Associations
- Social clubs: Pub teams
- Faith groups
- Diaspora groups: Members of your local community who have moved away/overseas

## What to ask them for:

There are many ways that you can attract a groups attention and get them involved. Here are some ideas:

- A group could adopt your organisation as charity of the year
- A group could hold an event for your organisation
- A group could sponsor your publications
- A group could volunteer for your organisation
- A group could hold a cash-collection or have a permanent collection box for your organisation
- A group could become ambassadors for your organisation, promoting your work throughout the community
- Group members could introduce you to their networks and contacts
- Group members could open up their workplaces or children's schools to your organisation
- A group could use their contacts to recruit supporters for your organisation or request support in kind

## Why might a group support your organisation?

- Personal connection: if you know someone within the group
- Affinity for the cause: if someone within the group, or the group itself, also believes in animal protection
- If by working with you the group will generate positive publicity
- If by working with you the group can attract new members
- If by working with you the group can produce a dynamic calendar of events and activities and so keep their members more involved.

## Research

As with any fundraising, you should first start by identifying groups that you could approach. With everyone on your staff, volunteers and board members you should start by brainstorming and listing every group in your local community.

Then look at the contacts you have within those groups. Maybe one of your volunteers plays bridge, or has a child in the scouts, or is a member of a tennis club. All these contacts could prove very valuable in building relationships with a group.

Find out:

- Do they have a history of supporting non-profit organisations or charitable giving?
- What types of organisations have they supported in the past?
- How many organisations do they support and is there a time limit?
- How do they select which organisations they support?
- Is there a formal process for applying for support?
- When is the selection made?
- What type of support have they offered in the past?
- What amount of money have they raised or donated?
- What types of activities do the group enjoy?
- What are their interests?
- Have any members of the group supported your organisation on an individual basis? If so what and how did they support you?
- Would the involvement of this particular group enhance your organisation?

## Making the Approach

As with any fundraising activity you will need to tailor your fundraising request for support. This will mean introducing a fundraising appeal that is specific to the group. This is not simply a case of telling the group what you need and offering them a selection of your projects that they can support, you may need to produce materials and create a fundraising activity around the specific group.

When you are working with groups it helps to think about not only why they might support your organisation, but how? This is why your research is so important. If you have worked out what hobbies or activities the group enjoys, build a fundraising angle around that appeal. It is important to make this creative. Some examples:

- You could approach a book club with a sponsored read-a-thon and instead of certificates produce commemorative bookmarks.
- You could ask the golf club to organise a charity golf day at their club, but add activities or twists to ensure that this is recognised as a special event in their calendar and promotes your organisation, for example special prizes for top fundraisers.
- You could ask the scouts if they could come in once a week to clean the kennels.
- You could ask the local fitness group to arrange a sponsored run or triathlon.

Also remember though that you do not have to choose the most obvious activity! Think about the group in broader terms and not only the activity they have in common – are they formal or informal, are they a range of ages or all of similar age? Use your research and ask the group to support you by doing something they will love to do. Make the pitch at the time when they will be selecting which organisation to support.

## Building the relationship

Obviously every group will be different, and you will be starting building your relationships with these groups at different stages, however when starting from scratch, getting support from a group can take time.

You could start by offering to attend a group meeting to give a talk about your organisation. You could then invite them to support you in smaller, less direct ways, such as taking a collection box or inviting them to an event before deciding whether to invest in a full fundraising pitch. Ensure that you have a number of options to offer the group for them to support.

Think about inviting the group, or a couple of key members, to your organisation. As with any (potential) supporter, keep the group informed of what you are doing, and any success stories you have.

## Thanking the group

The Rotary club often appreciate their support being acknowledged publicly, so a plaque or a dedicated kennel may be a good way to thank them for their support

However you do it, make sure that you thank the group for their support. This is a good opportunity to provide you both with some publicity, as the local press often cover these stories – the more original and unique the event or fundraising activity the more likely the media will cover it.

Don't lose touch with the group. Even if they select you as their charity of the year, this does not mean that all contact has to stop at the end of the year. Keep the relationship going, and ensure that any individual relationships that developed through this relationship are also nurtured.

## Tips

You don't have to join each group in order to fundraise from them, but using someone with an interest in that particular pastime to make the pitch will help.

Make your appeals innovative and creative. Do not necessarily go for the obvious choice of fundraising activity.

If the group that you are approaching are looking for new members suggest events that will attract members of the public outside of their group, such as a sponsored event.

If you are planning on approaching a group such as a parent-teacher-association, you could suggest a joint fundraiser. That way you can pool your resources, attract a wider audience, gain greater publicity and half the work. If you do decide this, make the agreement formal, ensure that all parties understand the agreement and the division of money and labour, and choose your partners carefully.

Above all support the group throughout the duration of the relationship, offer them encouragement, and ensure that they feel appreciated for all their hard work on behalf of your organisation. Thank them sincerely for their support and keep in touch!