

How to Fundraise via Grants

The Webster dictionary defines fundraising as “as “the act or process of raising funds by soliciting contributions or pledges, as for a non-profit organization or a political cause.”

Any project that wishes to be successful has to raise funds to be able to support it. Infact, one of the first things that a project organizing team thinks about is “how much would it cost to organize this?” Hence, fundraising is not a task that is delegated to one person in the team and then forgotten about while other work is taken care of. It is a task that starts from day one and requires the entire team’s effort. It usually helps to have direct involvement of the chair of the organizing committee and at least one and perhaps more members who are focused on this aspect. However, these fundraisers cannot work in isolation since their input typically carries a heavy weight in the program as well. As they interact with potential funders, they find out what does and does not “sell” and they bring in that positive influence on the entire project.

Fundraising is typically done via three methods:

1. By applying for grants from foundations and other funding agencies
2. By organizing events that raise money (such as concerts, bake-sale etc)
3. By selling advertising spots, banners etc.

Typically you can find potential funding organizations/foundations in the following ways:

1. Searching online and on internet funders databases (e.g. www.fdncenter.org)
2. By referral and assistance from your Board of Trustees and other mentors
3. By referral from IFMSA members who had positive interaction with a funder

There is no single way to find out whom you should apply to for funding. However, it can be a waste of time to apply to the thousands of funding agencies and foundations that may be available in the database. Once you have done some research and are starting to find potential funding sources, divide up the agencies/foundations (called grant-makers from here on) into tiered lists according to priority:

e.g.

- Tier 1 = high priority (spend most time on them)
- Tier 2 = medium priority (spend lesser time on them)
- Tier 3 = lower priority (backup in case all others fail)

Most people make the mistake of putting large grant-makers (such a Gates Foundation, DANIDA, UNESCO) in Tier 1 and smaller foundations (such as John M. Lloyd’s Foundation etc) in Tier 2 and 3. That may be a mistake. Gates Foundation may have a lot of money but you have to see first if you fit their profile well. The smaller foundation may have lesser funds but they may be looking for new funds, less people probably approach them, and they may be able to provide smaller seed or emergency grants.

You should search for the foundations with three criteria in mind:

1. The **subject** approach identifies foundations that have expressed an interest in funding programs in a specific subject field, such as higher education, or the arts.
2. The **geographic** approach identifies foundations that fund programs in a particular city, state, or region. Although some give nationally and even internationally, most funders limit their giving to specific geographic areas.
3. The **type of support** approach identifies foundations that provide specified types of support, such as building funds, seed money, and scholarships to individuals or general operating support.

Depending on your project, you will need to find grant-makers who will fund your project topic, in your geographic location and for your kind of activity. Those that fit these criteria will go into Tier 1, and the rest into Tier 2 and Tier 3, respectively.

Different Kinds of Grant-makers

There are a few different kinds of grant-makers and you should look into all of them as potential sources for funding. You will find each to be more interested in different sections of your proposal. That is because some things in your proposal would align well with their own goals and objectives as a grant-maker.

- 1. Private Independent Foundations:** They are the largest (in number) source of philanthropic money. They are usually called by the name of the person who set them up, e.g. Gates Foundation, Mellon Foundation, McArthur Foundation, John M. Lloyd's Foundation. Their goals and ideals are more general and they are easier to reach. They pay more attention to new proposals.
- 2. Corporate Foundations:** They are the philanthropic wings of corporations and usually have relatively rigid goals and objectives. They wish to gain something (in the form of goodwill/advertising for their company as well) by providing funds to you. E.g. Hewlett Packard Foundation, Coca-Cola.
- 3. Government Agencies:** These are usually government-operated funds that have a lot of money to give but generally require bureaucratic procedures. Typically, having somebody as an advisor who is knowledgeable on how to approach them (via appropriate channels) is useful. E.g. DANIDA, CIDA. These agencies usually provide money for regional benefits to gain international political repute. These are operated through the Ministries of Foreign Affairs as well as the Diplomatic Missions of the respective countries
- 4. Non-Governmental agencies:** Most UN agencies fall under this category. They provide a lot of support in the actual implementation as well since they have departments that work on the particular topics that your project is about. Finding a mid-level person in these agencies to become a mentor is a good idea. S/he can assist you in developing the project as well as finding some seed-funding within their organization. E.g. UNESCO, UNAIDS, Global Health Council.

Research on Grant-maker

Each grant-maker has its own goals and objectives that it wants to meet by giving grants to capable projects and organizations. *Your project has to match their goals and your proposal (and especially cover letter) should make a clear reference to their goals to show how they match.* The grant-makers objectives/profiles are easily available via three ways:

1. Grant-makers' databases (e.g. www.fdncenter.org)
2. Grant-maker's web-site (e.g. www.gatesfoundation.org)
3. By writing to grant-maker and receiving their pamphlet in the mail.

Each grant-maker may also have funding cycles, which are dates when the Board will meet and decide on future grants. You may also have to follow those deadlines. So if the deadline is March 15, make sure your application is in much before March 15. Some other grant-makers may not have funding cycles and may provide funds on a rolling basis.

Some grant-makers want you to first send a letter of intent and once they like it, they will ask you to send the full proposal. In some other cases, especially if you are running out of time for your project, send the full proposal. Its best to send the proposal to somebody's name, typically a Program Officer in the field in which your project falls. Send everything on proper letterhead so it looks official. Make sure there are no spelling errors, name-mistakes etc.

Organize yourself

It is extremely important that your organization is **organized** in its fundraising. Your project needs to have a well-defined fundraising strategy. Make sure everybody knows who is making the calls to which foundations so that no foundation is called twice by members of the same group. That is strictly forbidden!

Document every conversation you have with a foundation, even if it is an exchange of e-mail, phone call, or letter. Keep a folder on each foundation. It will be useful for future projects as well.

There should be a direct communication link between people responsible for the following tasks. They should be ready and available to each other at all times since lack of information can make a fundraiser look unprofessional and the organization unreliable to a grant-maker:

1. Person who is updating the proposal and budget
2. Person who is in contact with the Board of Trustees
3. Person who is coordinating the fundraising
4. Person who can get you letters of reference, bios of organizers, bios of participants.
5. Person who can get copies of reports from previous IFMSA activities.

Before you approach a grant-maker

Rehearse: Make sure you know exactly what you are going to say and what are the key statements that you are hoping to use to convince the grant-maker about your project.

1. Read the proposal carefully and know the project program and strengths well. Knowing the goals and objectives well will help.
2. Have a good idea on what has been the work done in the past in this field and you are not replicating another project that has already been done.
3. Believe in your project. Know that your organization is best suited to do this project.
4. Believe in your budget. Make sure you understand why it is costing you so much, why it is being held in a particular country/location and why you need to provide so much funding for participants travel.
5. Have a sheet on the basic facts about your organization:
 - a. When was it founded, how many members now
 - b. Demographics of your organization (nationalities, gender, issues, age)
 - c. Basic vision/goals for the organization
 - d. Annual Budget of the organization
 - e. Key projects that organization did in the past
 - f. Who has funded this organization in the past
 - g. Is your organization tax-exempt (in the USA and in other countries?)
6. Have a sheet on the grant-maker you are going to approach:
 - a. Name and location of grant-maker
 - b. Their vision and goal that is aligned with your project
 - c. How did you find out about them – any referrals?
 - d. Have you already sent them a copy of proposal and budget?
7. Have a very short (2-3 sentence statement) ready that summarises why you are calling. E.g. *"My name is Bilal Zuberi, I am a student at MIT in USA and I am calling on behalf of the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations. Our organization now works in 84 countries with thousands of members and we are organizing a regional workshop on HIV/AIDS and Human rights in South Africa for which we wish to approach your organization for funding and support. Briefly, we find this workshop to be well aligned with your organizations goals in securing the fundamental rights of HIV victims and we think we can benefit a lot from your collaboration with us."*

How to approach a grant-maker

Make sure you have already mailed the application (with any official forms, proposal, budget, Board of Directors List, other attachments) to the grant-maker. If you sent it to a specific person there, his/her name will be useful to look up and call about 1 -2 weeks after you have sent the proposal.

Fund-raising has also been called friend-raising but it is not so easy. Once an organization funds you, they become professional friends of your organization and will give you higher regard than newcomers. Just sending the proposal to an organization results in nothing. Typically, unless they know your organization already, your proposal may get rejected. So you have to do more than that. You **HAVE** to call and you have to pursue the grant-maker.

During a call:

1. Remember that the person you are calling is busy and has no idea who you are.
2. Be polite and be slow. Don't throw all details about your project at him since you are well aware of them but he is taken off-guard.
3. Always have in mind what the aim for this phone-call is: e.g. checking up if your proposal reached and if you can have a meeting to describe the project in person.
4. Always ask: 'Could I have a few minutes of your time?/ Is this a convenient time or should I call again later?'
5. If they suggest they have not yet looked at your proposal, say you can briefly tell them a little about it and they can read the detail later.
6. If they haven't received the proposal, get their name, fax, e-mail address, mailing address and suggest you will fax the executive summary and send the proposal by courier service.
7. If they ask questions, listen carefully, wait for them to finish and then answer. It is good to have your proposal in front of you at that point.
8. If you don't know the answer, don't make one up. Politely say you can find more about it in detail and get back to them.
9. Make sure you have thought about all the weaknesses of the workshop that a potential donor could point out and have an answer ready for as many possible questions as you can think of.
10. Generally, it's best to try and set up a meeting so you answer questions on face. Phone call is not the best way to communicate. So if they have questions, ask (forcefully) if you can come into their office (even if for a brief period). Set up the appointment, even if for 15 mins. It is much more difficult to say no to people you have met and discussed ideas with!
11. Make sure you inform the grant-maker that what you need from them is not just the money but also their help and support. They have invaluable experience in this field and if they like your project idea, they can help develop it greatly, while funding it at the same time.
12. Always end a conversation/call with making a new appointment either to call back...or better to meet with the program-officer.
13. Finally remember to say: 'Thankyou for your time/help/advice'.

A grant-maker hears from many different people in any given day. So make sure they remember you. Drop a small line of hello and thank you for their time after every conversation. This can be done in the form of an email or a letter or a post-card from your organization. Make them your business friend. This means you do not start discussing random topics with them, but such that you can have a more jovial and less-tense start to conversation next time.

A few highlights that some people forget:

1. Always keep your appointments
2. Do not think your project is good so it should get funding. You have to convince others.
3. Be confident about your project and know its strengths and weaknesses well.
4. Be polite, smile and act genuine.

5. Try to get a face -to-face meeting as much as possible.
6. If the grant-maker do not return your phone calls- call them back
7. Ask for an amount that seems reasonable for the grant-maker. If they give an average of \$10,000 do not ask for \$200,000.
8. If you have also applied to few other large grant-makers, let this grant-maker know. Co-funded projects have even better chances of getting funded.
9. If someone or some organization has already pledged a certain amount towards the project, let the grant-makers know. This shows somebody else also trusts you.
10. Maybe the grant-maker wants to have a speaker/lecturer on your project/workshop. Inquire if they are interested since they are all experts in the field as well and it will be another something to "sell" for you.
11. If the grant-maker cannot give money, can they provide gifts-in-kind. Maybe they can refer you to another foundation, speaker, provide books, computers, software, etc.
12. Even if they do not provide money, *do not burn the bridges*. Ask if they would still like to receive updates on your project. Maybe they will be interested in your next project once they read your final report of this project.
13. Provide regular updates on project development and fundraising to your Board members. Keep them engaged so your project is at the back of their mind. Pass on the good news to them when you receive funding or some new celebrity joins the Board. Typically once a month or once in two months is good. If the Board members see you working hard, they will also try harder to refer you to a grant-making organization.
14. Ask your friends, professional contacts, family members and other acquaintances if they have a resource that can be helpful. Maybe a distant friend who has nothing to do with medicine will know a grant-maker in a foundation.
15. Keep a tab on what grant-makers have funded IFMSA activities in the past. They already know IFMSA and will trust it more and fund more activities.

Meeting – Face to Face:

If you are lucky, a grant-maker will allow a face-to-face meeting. You have already won half the battle! Usually you will be able to explain the project much better in person and you will find it is difficult for a grant-maker to refuse you in your face. Even if s/he is not able to fund your project, s/he can refer you to other people or help you in some other ways.

It's a good idea to do the following before you meet a grant-maker face-to-face:

1. Read up on grant-maker and know the program under which you are applying. E.g. *Teen-age pregnancy Program of Ford Foundation*.
2. Remember the key reasons why you think this grant-maker should fund your project.
3. Be on time and relax before the meeting. Being nervous will make you stutter. Don't worry; you have nothing to lose and only to gain in this meeting.
4. Dress well and enter with confidence and a smile. It helps if two people go to such meetings and both of you have good communication with each other and if they represent different genders.
5. Prepare a short powerpoint-type presentation about your project (not more than 5 -6 slides) in case they give you an opportunity.
6. Bring a few extra copies of the proposal, budget, Board of Director's List, other attachments that belong to your proposal (such as Letters of recommendation, reports of previous IFMSA events etc).
7. Anticipate difficult questions and have your answers ready. Grant-makers would really like to know:
 - a. The need for this project
 - b. Credibility of your organization
 - c. Your confidence in your team and budget
 - d. Your ability to not just **prepare** but **execute** and **evaluate** the project
8. Listen to the grant-maker well and look in his/her eyes to show confidence. Do not interrupt and do not play with your pen or folders.
9. In your conversation, do not appear uninterested or bureaucratic; show your human side and your emotions on the human need your project is addressing.

10. Do not forget to thank before you leave.

Typically you should go in expecting one of the following outcomes:

1. Positive response and hence discussion on how much they will fund
 - a. Discuss the amount and how it can be used. Ask if there are any restrictions? When do they need a final report from your organization?
 - b. Ask what next steps you need to take to follow procedure.
 - c. Remember to ask for any paper work or contact addresses etc that you need to follow up on.
2. Neutral discussion and hence they will suggest they need to think some more.
 - a. Leave additional material with them so they understand your project some more.
 - b. Ask if they would like additional letters of recommendation from your mentors, Board of Trustees.
 - c. Ask when you can check back with them to find the status.
 - d. Let them know they can contact you or any of your Board members at any time if they have additional questions.
3. Negative discussion, then
 - a. Ask them if they can provide seed-funding, or emergency grant
 - b. Ask them if they find sections of your proposal that could be made better.
 - c. Check if they can refer you to grant-makers they know who may be able to fund your project.

Appendix

Online Funding Resources:

Foundation Center Online/Directory	http://www.fdccenter.org
Council of Foundations	http://www.cof.org/
Funders Online	http://www.fundersonline.org/
UK Fundraising	http://www.fundraising.co.uk/
Fund-raising.com	http://www.fund-raising.com
WelcomeEurope.com	http://www.welcomeurope.com
Fundraising Bazaar	http://www.larmar.com

Following are the web links to OECD Development Assistance Committee member state agencies around the World:

COUNTRY	URL	AGENCY
Australia	http://www.ausaid.gov.au/	AusAid
Austria	http://gov.austria-info.at/ForeignAffairs/	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Belgium	http://www.diplobel.fgov.be/en/index_en.htm	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Canada	http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/	CIDA
Denmark	http://www.idrc.ca/	Int'l Dev Research Centre
E.U.	http://www.um.dk/english	DANIDA (Evaluation Unit)
Finland	http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg08/dqviii.htm	European Commission
France	http://www.vn.fi/vn/um/kyo/home.html	Finnish Aid
Germany	http://www.france.diplomatie.fr/frmonde/index.html	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ireland	http://www.gtz.de/home/english/index.html	GTZ
Japan	http://www.irlgov.ie/iveagh/	Irish Aid
	http://jica.ific.or.jp/	JICA
	http://www.nttl.co.jp/infomofa/oda	MOFA
	http://www.oecf.go.jp	OECF
Luxembourg	http://www.lux-development.lu	Luxembourg Dev. Coop
Netherlands	http://Hermes.bz.minbuza.nl/english/	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
New Zealand	http://www.mft.govt.nz/	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Norway	http://odin.dep.no/ud/nornytt/norad.html	ODIN /NORAD

Spain	http://www.docuweb.ca/sispain/english/foreign/developm.html	
Sweden	http://www.sida.se/	SIDA
Switzerland	http://www.sdc.gov.ch	SDC
UK	http://oneworld.org/oda/index.html	DFID
US	http://www.info.usaid.gov	USAID

Most prominent intergovernmental organizations:

European Union	(EU, http://www2.echo.lu/)
The Commonwealth of Nations	(http://www.fco.gov.uk/index.html)
Organization of American States	(OAS, http://www.oas.org/)
Association of Southeast Asian Nations	(ASEAN, http://www.asean.or.id/)
Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development	(OECD, http://www.oecd.org/)
North Atlantic Treaty Organization	(NATO, www.nato.int/)
Asian Development Bank	(http://www.asiandevbank.org/)
Inter-American Development Bank	(http://www.iadb.org/)
Caribbean Development Bank	(http://www.cdbank.org/)
African Development Bank	(http://www.africandevbank.com/)
World Bank	(http://www.worldbank.org/)
Food and Agriculture Organization	(FAO, http://www.fao.org/)
United Nations Children's Fund	(UNICEF, http://www.unicef.org/)
United Nations Development Programme	(UNDP, http://www.undp.org/)
United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development	(CSD, http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd.htm)
United Nations Commission on the Status of Women	(CSW, http://www.undp.org/fwcw/csw.htm)
The United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women	(CEDAW, http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/)
United Nations Development Fund for Women	(UNIFEM, http://www.undp.org:81/unifem/)
United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs	(UNDHA, http://www96.reliefweb.int/)
United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization	(UNESCO, http://www.unesco.org/)
United Nations Environment Programme	(UNEP, http://www.unep.org/)
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	(UNHCR, http://www.unhcr.ch/)
World Health Organization	(WHO, http://www.who.ch/)
The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS	(UNAIDS, http://www.unaids.org/)

Some prominent foundations and their web-sites:

Allen Charitable Foundation, Paul G., The (WA)	http://www.paulallen.com/foundations/
Allen Foundation, Inc. (MI)	http://www.tamu.edu/baum/allen.html
Balance Bar Company (NY)	http://www.balance.com/grants/default.asp
Burroughs Wellcome Fund (NC)	http://www.bwfund.org/
Captain Planet Foundation, Inc. (GA)	http://www.turner.com/cpf
Carnegie Corporation of New York (NY)	http://www.carnegie.org/
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (DC)	http://www.ceip.org/
Casey Foundation, Annie E., The (MD)	http://www.aecf.org/
Coca-Cola Foundation, Inc., The (GA)	http://www2.coca-cola.com/citizenship/foundation_coke.html
eBay Foundation (CA)	http://pages.ebay.com/aboutebay98/foundation/index.html
Ford Foundation, The (NY)	http://www.fordfound.org/
Gates Foundation, Bill and Melinda (WA)	http://www.gatesfoundation.org/
Grant Foundation, William T. (NY)	http://www.wtgrantfoundation.org/
Greenwall Foundation, The (NY)	http://www.greenwall.org/
Hewlett Foundation, William and Flora, The (CA)	http://www.hewlett.org/
Humana Foundation, Inc., The (KY)	http://www.humanafoundation.org/
i2 Foundation, The (TX)	http://www.i2foundation.org/
IBM Corporation (NY)	http://www.ibm.com/IBM/IBMGives/index.html
Kaiser Family Foundation, Henry J., The (CA)	http://www.kff.org/
Kellogg Foundation, W.K. (MI)	http://www.wkff.org/
Lloyd Foundation, John M. (CA)	http://www.johnmloyd.org/
MacArthur Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. (IL)	http://www.macfdn.org/
Mellon Foundation, Andrew W., The (NY)	http://www.mellon.org/
Merck & Co., Inc. (NJ)	http://www.merck.com/philanthropy
Microsoft Corporation (WA)	http://www.microsoft.com/giving/
Mott Foundation, Charles Stewart (MI)	http://www.mott.org/
Newman's Own (CT)	http://www.newmansown.com/
Nike, Inc. (OR)	http://www.nikebiz.com/social/index.shtml
Novartis Foundation	http://www.foundation.novartis.com
Open Society Institute (NY)	http://www.soros.org/
Packard Foundation, David and Lucile, The (CA)	http://www.packfound.org/
Pew Charitable Trusts, The (PA)	http://www.pewtrusts.com/
Public Welfare Foundation, Inc. (DC)	http://www.publicwelfare.org/
RGK Foundation (TX)	http://www.rgkfoundation.org/

Rippel Foundation, Fannie E. (NJ)	http://fdncenter.org/grantmaker/rippel/index.html
Rockefeller Brothers Fund (NY)	http://www.rbf.org/index.html
Rockefeller Foundation, The (NY)	http://www.rockfound.org/
Scaife Family Foundation (PA)	http://www.scaife.com/
Schultz Foundation, Arthur B., The (NY)	http://www.absfoundation.org/
Shared Earth Foundation (MD)	http://www.sharedearth.org/
Shell Foundation, Inc.	http://www.shellfoundation.org/
Soros Foundations Network (NY)	http://www.soros.org/
Spencer Foundation, The (IL)	http://www.spencer.org/
Spencer Foundation, The W.L.S. (CA)	http://www.pacificfoundationsservices.com/
Templeton Foundation, John (PA)	http://www.templeton.org/
Tinker Foundation, Inc., The (NY)	http://fdncenter.org/grantmaker/tinker/index.html
Trellis Fund, The (DC)	http://fdncenter.org/grantmaker/trellis/
Turner Foundation, Inc. (GA)	http://www.turnerfoundation.org/
Until There's A Cure Foundation (CA)	http://www.utac.org/
Varsavsky Foundation, The (NY)	http://www.varsavskyfoundation.org/
Vetlesen Foundation, G. Unger, The (NY)	http://www.monellvetlesen.org/
Von Liebig Foundation, Inc., William J., The (FL)	http://www.vonliebigfoundation.com/
Wallace Global Fund (DC)	http://www.wgf.org/
Weeden Foundation	http://www.weedenfdn.org/