

## How to generate funds and support for less popular projects?

**This bite size resource is for VCS organisations who may perceive their project is not as popular as others and may feel overlooked by some in the community who have more heart for other projects.**

The first thing to remember is that popularity is in the eye of the beholder and it is possible to change the way that a project is perceived.

If you feel the image of a project is bland or something that may be embarrassing to some people, then why not alter your platform? These tips may be the food for thought that you need.

### **Research the perceivable links with your project**

A charity must not work outside of its charitable objects or in a way that is not deemed charitable, including not having a political agenda. E.g. it may be that your project needs support to promote a project assisting undocumented immigrants who are in crisis. It is not possible for a charity to go against the law not to employ an undocumented immigrant, however, with objects allowing, the undocumented immigrant can be supported with clothes, food and advice. There is some perception within the community that an undocumented immigrant should not receive support as they have no leave to remain in the UK and so will not support the cause, nevertheless, it is possible to link with similar projects such as food banks, places that donate clothing and other essentials to those in need. By creating partnerships with general good will groups; the project can use this network to assist in delivering the necessary support.

### **Ensure you have the confidence of trustees and members**

Much of an organisations support will come from its own trustees and members. The very fact that these people are closely involved with the organisation shows that they do have a vested interest in the project. Time freely given to support will only increase and expand into donations and leads should they have confidence in the work being undertaken. Don't forget trustees and members are some of the closest to your project and are more likely to spot any concerns than someone external in the general public. Should an organisation have a large member base such as carers, it is possible that the carers would be on a very low income. These people supported by a network will likely be the most passionate for a cause but less able to afford to donate. By having the confidence of trustees, the fundraising team may seek approval to distribute a leaflet or mail out to inform of the ways people can donate or volunteer, the carers can pass this by word of mouth or social media to others. Receiving information from a passionate source is more useful in improving your platform.

### **Approach funders who are not looking for a way to find a self-spotlight**

Funders who typically showcase those projects funded to increase their own platform may opt to support projects they deem as 'sexy'. Try to avoid avenues for funders whose first priority is in self-platform rather than the community cause the fund would support. E.g. the funds that are available from a left estate or researching funds specifically available by statistical relevance can be a way of helping to identify those pots of support most likely to succeed for you.

### **Implement quality not quantity strategies when organising events**

To organise an event, instead of having multiple people all having a go at setting up various activities that may not always hold enough relevance or produce enough benefit in terms of cost. Focus the input on fewer events with the most experienced event organisers as a lead to the rest of the team. This will help to drive the purpose within the event as it is one thing to approach a prospect; it is another to generate interest and support for what you are plugging.

## **End any failing strategies and play to your strengths**

Some ways of generating income and awareness are charitable Christmas cards, large events, coffee mornings, etcetera. Those strategies that work should be continued and built upon, however any schemes seeming to be a costly distraction should be ended. Innovative ideas to replace any failures will help you to find your strengths and utilise the best possible platforms for your project.

## **Use geography to your advantage**

Support and funds can have restrictions based on physical location. E.g. some funders see the North/South divide as an unfair distribution of wealth and as such only support projects in Yorkshire. According to the indices of deprivation Yorkshire is within the top 30% most deprived in Britain.

There are tools to help source support by location such as the FCS tool to find grants by map:

<http://www.fcsassociates.co.uk/grants-map/>

There is also the South Yorkshire Community Foundation: <https://www.sycf.org.uk> which is a support for community groups who help people facing hardship and disadvantage and those working to improve the communities where they live.

## **Consider your target audience**

Consider to whom you wish the project to appeal. When attempting to recruit volunteer support or source donations, do so with an image that would catch the eye of your audience. A social media approach with bright colours, images and short to the point phrases will help to ensure full context is taken in at a short glance and in a way that appeals to the general public. Consequently, when targeting professional support and funding providers try to include more information, the fact potential supporters are reading shows they have interest and wish to know if their support would be given to a good cause by assisting your project.

Also think of stigma attached. There is usually a lot of clout in a campaign when successful beneficiary support is quoted, however, consent to do a case study or getting people to talk about what they may feel is an embarrassing issue; such as testicular cancer, may mean that the focus needs to be a two pronged approach, first try to help break down stigma about the issue, then appeal for support. When stigma is removed then there is a chance this action alone will help to add popularity to your cause, the current platform then may be enough to generate enquiry.

## **When implementing new techniques remember to follow your charitable objects**

Adding a new perspective, using initiative and joining forces with similar projects are all brilliant ways to help increase interest for your organisation, however, it is important to ensure your own project remains transparent and abides regulation. Ensure efforts don't stray outside of your objects or charity law; else the Charity Commission will investigate and act within its regulatory powers against any misdemeanours. Should your charity objects prevent you from acting in a charitable way to better support the community where there is otherwise ability to operate further; it is possible to request a change in governing document with the Charity Commission if desired:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission> .

## **Support is available**

If you would like help to generate funds and support for your project please email Voluntary Action Rotherham by: [triage@varotherham.org.uk](mailto:triage@varotherham.org.uk). Website: <http://www.varotherham.org.uk/>

Alternatively, there is guidance available on the Charity Commission Website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission>

Another bitesize resource of interest:

[Fundraising information for groups](#)

