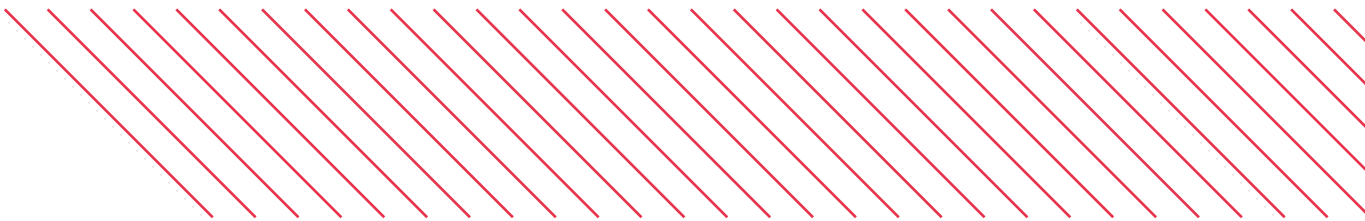**Fundraising
for Schools**

Fundraising for Schools
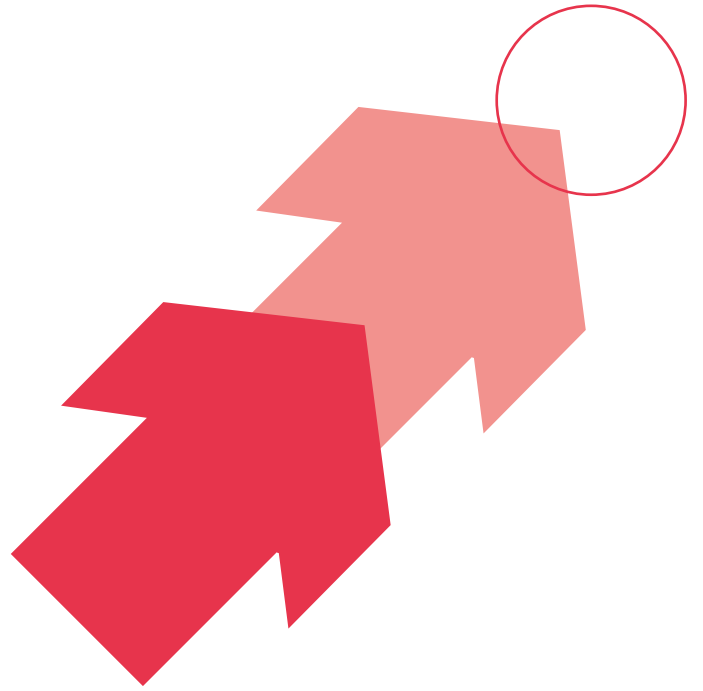
Introduction

Fundraising can be defined as collection of funds/goods/services for realization of our ideas and activities that contribute to their fulfilment. It is not all about money and how to get it, it should be more about establishing long-term partnerships with possible donors because in that way we sustainably secure resources for the present and future.

Nowadays fundraising has become pure science with a very comprehensive methodology and concrete guidelines that can teach you how to become a successful fundraiser. But what if you are a teacher in a school, doing school based projects with no budget for extra-curricular activities but with great motivation to succeed? This short toolkit might support you in your mission.

Fundraising in Schools

Squeezed budgets and low government investments can make life diffi-cult for schools and force them to explore other fundraising possibilities. For those getting to grips with fundraising for the very first time, as well as seasoned fundraisers embarking on new projects, school fundraising can be a challenging task. The good news is that it doesn't have to be. With a considered and organized approach, anyone can turn their efforts into a successful fundraising campaign.

Fundraising can be a great way to connect with the community of stu-dents, parents, and teachers in and around the school. It can also be an opportunity for you to get directly involved in raising money for the school and its programs and show your support for the school.

It is not all about money and how to get it, it should be more about estab-lishing long-term partnerships with possible donors…

Fundraising Steps

The following steps might make it easier for you to learn about the most effective way how to approach this topic and start realizing fundraising activities through practice.

1. Establish School Fundraising Team

The fundraising team should consist of /made of should be made of rep-resentatives of School Board and Management, teachers, parents and students. The team does not have to be big but it is crucial that all the in-terested parties are represented. Initiators of the fundraising team could present the idea at the Board and Management or at teacher's meetings, at parent`s council meeting and student's councils if they exist and then people can vote for their team representative or just appoint one. The selected representatives should be motivated to deal with this topic so it is very important that they are willing to participate in this team effort on a voluntary basis. When the team is established you can publish the name of team members on school info board along with their contacts so that students, parents or teachers can address them when needed.

The team does not have to be big but it is crucial that all the interested parties are repre-sented.…

2. Develop Fundraising Strategy

The established team should develop a School Fundraising Strategy. That is not an easy process and it can be done in different ways. If the

team needs support, they can identify an expert (maybe via a parent, company of a parent or through an NGO) who is willing to contribute pro bono by facilitating the development or train team members on how to do it. Another option is that school secures some funds for hiring such and expert. If none of this is possible, here are some tips and guiding questions that might help the team:

Define the Problem ✓

Define the Vision ✓

Define the Activities ✓

Define Supporters ✓

Define Timeline ✓

Define Costs ✓

Define Procedurs ✓

› 1) Define the problem – what are the problems that school is facing? Do not focus on lack of money, but rather identify the actions steps leading to solving issues at hand that could be addressed by collecting and investing money in problem solving.

› 2) Define the vision – it would be great if you could come up with the school vision. How does your school look like in the future, in 10 years? Will your school become recognized as school with great positive environment for students and teachers? Will your school then already be a leader in Program Y implementation (life skills education) in your community, town, region?

› 3) Define the activities - list all the activities that need to be carried out so that your problems can be solved and your vision fulfilled. Don't be afraid, this list can be long, the point is to list all that comes to your mind as necessary, that needs to be done (from FT regular meetings, to logistics around fundraising activities to celebration when you get the funds). Develop an exhaustive Activity Plan that will help you meet all your requirements in a timely fashion.

› 4) Define supporters - Together with the tasks listed in activity plan you should identify people who can help you implement those tasks (like students, teacher, parents, but also community leaders, local entrepreneurs, media etc.) In this section, develop a contact list containing all the names, emails, phone numbers etc. since you will need that info later.

› 5) Define timeline, roles and responsibilities – in this section define the start date, duration of your action as well as the expected deadline. Following this column, determine who will be responsible for each activity, or their segments.

› 6) Define costs – although this whole process is about raising funds, it is necessary to secure some small amount of money for these operational activities. This is also a defining moment in which you decide how much money you will need for implementing the actions and who the potential donors are or could be.

Example of the Fundraising strategy table for 1 problem. You can create this table for each of the problems that you are focusing on.

	ACTIVITY	TIMELINE	SUPPORTERS	COST	RESPONSIBILITY
1					
2					

› 7) Define procedures for funds management – be very precise about establishing protocol and procedures for raised funds management. Make sure you respect the relevant national laws, but school guidelines as well related to expenditures, accounting, procurement and other legal procedures

DEFINE THE PROBLEM

DEFINE THE VISION

DEFINE THE ACTIVITIES

DEFINE SUPPORTERS

DEFINE TIMELINE

DEFINE COSTS

DEFINE PROCEDURS

3. **Do the Research**

Data collection is a very important step for your strategy development, but it should also become an integral part of the entire process (to do it continuously before, during and after the fundraising initiative). The data collection will provide you with a wide range of useful data: from identifying what is needed and ideas on how it could be done to what went well and what did not.. You can collect data in many different ways: by organizing focus group discussions (FDGs), individual interviews with students, parents and teachers or by setting an info desk that can serve during school breaks for students to get additional info or share their suggestions and ideas. Also, one part of the research can be done online, to learn how other schools deal with similar problems. When you collect all the information, you can analyze it and start the planning process.

Data collection is a very important step for your strategy development

4. **Consult Your Community – Don't be Afraid to Ask**

Do not forget that your school belongs to the community and that there are lot of people living in your community who can help you and support you on your journey. Go and meet with local municipality officers, local media, sport clubs, professional associations, art and culture organizations and all the others that you identify as stakeholders and that might contribute to the process. Give them the opportunity and secure a space for them to get involved and to actively take part. There are many ways in which people can help you, financial assistance being only one of the ways.

5. **Organize and Implement Activities**

When the planning phase is over and the next steps are being clearly defined it is the time to ACT! Start with your first activity and keep track of the process. Remember to be flexible and ready to adapt if challenges occur and they will, they always do, but the most important thing is to stay focused on what you want to accomplish.

6. **Learn From Your Experience and Improve**

When the process is finished and you have the monitoring data ready, analyze and learn from them. If you have developed a clear set of indicators for measuring your progress, now use them to assess the level of accomplishment. Organize evaluation meeting for the fundraising team and discuss the results, success and challenges and learn. Those are very important lessons for your future behavior.

When the planning phase is over and the next steps are being clearly defined it is the time to ACT!

Fundraising styles

1. School based fundraising

School based fundraising is the practice of raising money to support educational enrichment programs by schools or school groups. There are many ways to do school based fundraising and this guide will present some of them. You should always be very clear about why the event is being organized and what will the funds collected be used for. Being transparent is this way will make people trust you and be sure what exactly they are contributing to. At some events you can give appreciation certificates, thank you badges etc. and in that way, express your gratitude to people who have provided support.

Recycling – securing or building/producing boxes for recycling papers and plastics that are placed all over the school can accumulate a lot of funds for a long-term period, because the school can get refund from communal public services. You need to connect with the local communal services, get the information and establish the cooperation. Collecting of plastic and papers should be done by teachers and students and you can first organize some promotional event in the school that will announce the start of this process. After setting the boxes for it, student and teachers can start recycling. You can even make some kind of competition between the classes who collects more and you can organize some small celebration event at the end of each school year to announce the winners and funds collected. This can become regular activity and ongoing funds collection.

School Fair – can be organized once a year when students can create some goods or donate some goods for selling in the school fair. This is also a place where you can sell cookies and lemonade and best activity where you can include parents and teachers. Also this event can be used to present school initiatives to donors and the community stakeholders (it can be organized for School` Day)

Sports Competition – great outdoor activity when teams could pay some small fee for participation. It can involve different sport activities but also different teams: teams of parents, teams of teachers, team of students but also teams of community leaders. At this event you can call famous sportsman or sportswoman who can participate in the event and get great attention from the community.

Eco-day – create an event when all the students and teachers will come dressed in green and arrange school and school yard cleaning and

You should always be very clear about why the event is being organized...

planting flowers and trees. You can get free flowers, seeds and fertile soil from local businesses. Of course, the participation is "green fee".

Lunch – you can invite some Chefs from local restaurants to cook the lunch or prepare some snacks for all the students and teachers in the schools who can buy their lunch. Out of the collected funds you pay off the supplies needed for this event but also raise additional funds.

School party – with charging entrance where students could have fun dancing and mingling. This is also great opportunity to promote healthy lifestyles and promotion of non-alcoholic drinks that you can get from local store supporters.

Games Day – Let students bring in toys and games to play with on the last day of term and ask for a donation in return.

Game Show – Host your version of Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? or The Weakest Link. Otherwise adapt board games for big audiences and get prizes donated.

Karaoke – Arrange your own Factor X (here we can put the local popular TV show with singing) contest.

Sponge Throw – Ask students to donate in return for getting the opportunity to throw soapy sponges at teachers. Best done on a sunny day.

Talent Contest – Hold a talent contest for students to showcase their skills. You could make it TV show style by nominating judges to pick the winners.

Treasure Hunt – Put together a treasure hunt, split students into pairs or teams and let the detective work begin. Ask a local business to donate a prize for the winning pair/team and set a suggested donation amount for entering.

World Cultures Day – Get students to dress up for the day, give each class a different country to base their theme on.

Teacher Charity Game - Generate excitement among the students by attending a special sports game that has teams made up of their teachers! Sell tickets to watch the game, and consider having a concession stand. It could be a serious game or something comical.

Teacher Charity Concert - Round up your teachers for a musical concert for the students! Sell tickets to watch the teachers perform songs – either as a big group or in small groups. Teachers could get creative and invite well-known performers to join them or have community sponsors.
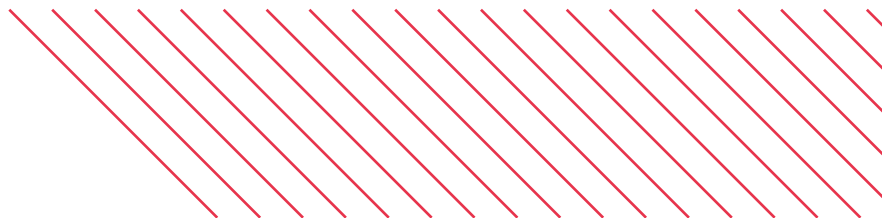
Coaching Sessions — Ask the local high school's coaches to sign up for weekly coaching sessions for various sports, then auction those off to the community.

Fundraising Dinner/Branch – where you can invite local businesses and institutions to participate and present your ideas (local drink stores and restaurants can donate food and drinks). This is the place where you can ask for all kind of support for your ideas.

2. Community Fundraising

There are a lot of material and non-material resources in your community that can be used as support to school programs and activities. First of all, you should identify all the existing services, shops, restaurants, businesses, firms etc. and explore about what their scope of work is and then find the connection or identify the common interest. Secondly, you should meet them and discuss about possible cooperation by presenting your vision and ideas and be specific about what your school needs from them. You have to be very clear and precise about what do you want and how you think they might help you (it can be about donating funds, or donating their time or supplies or services). Try to explain to them that their involvement and support will be publicly announced so it will be advertisement and promotion for them (in press releases, online media, video clips).

A good start might be to do something good and useful for your community. There are lot of actions that could be done like cleaning of the local park, planting flowers, decorating the benches or renovating some old public spaces or you could also organize a music festival that can gather all community representatives to visit your school and get introduced to your plans for school improvement program. Keep in mind that to treat this local partnerships as a long-term commitment and not the one-time engagement only. In that way people might connect with your school, be motivated and inspired to contribute and support you over a longer period of time.

You have to be very clear and precise about what do you want and how you think they might help you...
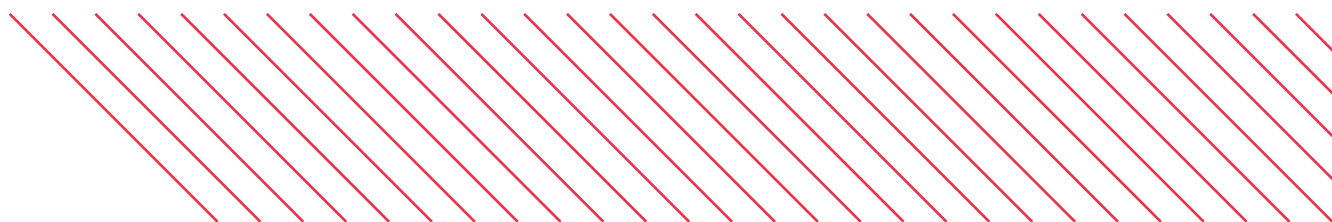
3. Domestic and International Fundraising

Fundraising can be done with domestic and international donors and the Balkan countries can access EU pre-accession funds as well. The national and international donors usually have open calls with specific theme(s) they would like to support and the deadline by which you need to send your idea proposal. In your proposal, you have to justify and explain the problem that you would like to solve and provide concrete methodology how will you solve it and what will be different after your project implementation. This process is sometimes very challenging since first you need to check are you eligible as school to apply to some call and then to check all legal issues related to application. Then the process of idea development can start and usually has to be put on the paper and very well explained in the project proposal, logical framework, budget and activity plan forms and documents. Those are the time limited resources with very clear procedures how they should be spent so you have to do everything "by the book". Maybe there is some local expert or a parent who know how to develop a project proposal and the related documents. Identify them and ask for help! More importantly, non-governmental organizations assisting you with the Program Y implementation can help you with the proposal development and provide you with the resources that might help you in the process (like websites offering some funding options).

4. Online Fundraising

Nowadays the online fundraising is very popular and here are some you might find interesting:

Donate now button on the school website, where interested people, organizations, donors can directly donate funds to the school. You can ask your IT developer to add this page to your website where you can present your vision and ideas to which funds can contribute and give necessary technical information for donation. Also, this is the place where you can list all previous or current donors and publicly express your gratefulness towards them.

Crowdfunding is the practice of funding a project or venture by raising many small amounts of money from a large number of people, typically via the Internet. You chose the online platform, post your idea (through document, by usually video or infographic). It became very popular and you can find more information at www.crowdfunding.com

Examples of sucesful fundraising

1. Recycle for School

Students in one school in the Western Balkans region organize twice a year Crowdfunding activity - Recycle for school. Students, parents, relatives, friends and other citizens are invited to bring electronic waste to school. The school has established a partnership with environmental organizations that promote action towards citizens, in order to mobilize as many people as possible to participate in the action.

The school has established a partnership with a company that purchases electronic waste. Earned money is used for funding programs and activities for students in school.

2. Sports day

Several schools in the region have established sports day or tournaments that are serving the fundraising needs for the schools. Schools organize together with students a variety of games and sports to give an opportunity to all students to join in.

Funds are collected through several models: charging admission to parents and other spectators; sponsors of the tournament; selling merchandise, snacks and drinks etc. Sometimes funds are collected for targeted cause and all participants are invited to donate additional money for this cause.

Tips & Trics

Here are some tips for successful fundraising to get the money you need while maintaining good relationships with the school community.

1. **Involve students, parents, teachers, community members in all stages of fundraising; from defining a vision to implementation of the activities.**

2. **Try to organize motivational and fun activities that people will love to participate in.**

3. **Be proactive about staying in touch with your supporters and donors but don't over do it.**

4. **Think outside the box – usual and traditional fundraising activities are great, but what can you do in a different way?**

5. **Focus on the end goal – be very clear about what you are raising money for and why.**

6. **Get personal – students can be great fundraisers if they tell their own story, from their own perspective about what they need the money for. Encourage them to tell and ask!**

Useful websites:

www.easy-fundraising-ideas.com

https://blog.fundly.com/fundraising-ideas-for-schools-and-education/

http://schoolaid.co.nz/7-awesome-fundraising-ideas/

https://www.groundwork.org.uk/school-a-z

http://www.coolfundraisingideas.net/school-fund-raising-idea

https://www.opencolleges.edu.au/informed/other/school-fundraising-ideas/

https://www.youcaring.com/c/school-fundraising