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Fundraising:
An Essential Element in the Development of our Associations

Training Booklet n° 18
Introduction

It is said that once when Saint Vincent saw the Queen of France, Anne of Austria, adorned with a magnificent river of diamonds, he said to her: “Your Majesty, let these stones be turned to bread”. The Queen immediately undid her necklace in order to give it to him.

Throughout his life, Saint Vincent had to act to find financial means, and he searched at every level of the network he had built, people from the royal court of course, but also the ladies of charity, and all his acquaintances. To increase the awareness of his donors, he sent a letter, which he called “Relation”...

Fundraising remains an essential element in the life of our AIC associations, quite simply because it allows us to bring to fruition our projects with the poorest and so to accomplish our mission today.

The AIC 2011-2013 Operational Guidelines, “WORKING TOGETHER”, are based on education, and invite us to build on our AIC training.

Fundraising gives rise to techniques that need to be learned, and Uca Agulló, from AIC USA and former member of the EB, has followed a course on this subject with the University of Monterrey, in Mexico. She led a workshop during the International Assembly in March 2011 in Madrid; which is the now the basis of this booklet.

A very big thank you to her.
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Objectives:

By the end of this workshop, we hope to:

⇒ Understand why it is necessary to professionalize fundraising.
⇒ Be more familiar with the process we need to employ to do this.

Picture the following scene: We are volunteers holding the reins of a cart pulled by two horses, the first horse representing our work as a volunteer:

What do we do? To what do we dedicate ourselves? We are an international association that fights against poverty, an international network of over 200,000 volunteers, organised into local teams which set up local projects. There are fifty-two associations in total, present in Africa, Latin America, Asia, Europe and the United States. We are one of the oldest voluntary associations, founded in 1617 by Saint Vincent de Paul, forefather of humanitarian aid.

We relentlessly dedicate our efforts as well as the major part of our time to this horse. And we justify this by saying things like: “It’s the reason why we are volunteers” [...] “I love working with the most disadvantaged people, looking after the elderly, working in canteens and hospitals” etc.

The second horse represents our association, the institutional part of our work. How much time can we dedicate to this horse? We are volunteers and not professionals. How can we justify this time? We know that what we like to do is work for and with the poorest people as we have always done and this is the reason why we are volunteers in this association. We are satisfied with it, for example we may have been able to provide 300 children with breakfast “for over 50 years already”. As a consequence, we do not dedicate ourselves to other major problems...
...And so the association continues its work without ever really paying attention to this second horse.

Nevertheless, even if we do our work properly, if we don’t take into account the necessary human, material and economic resources, we cannot continue like this.

How can we strengthen this second horse so that it continues to gallop alongside the first?

Fundraising isn’t only about the search for a financial contribution. It must be emphasised how important it is for us to promote the value of what we do. This is why we invest in and serve the association’s cause by giving our time, talents, effort and money...We need to feel that our contribution makes all the difference. This helps us to look at our association as a solid institution with fruitful future prospects.

If we manage to do this, we will have a guarantee that our association has the resources necessary to continue to fulfil its mission.
We can see the importance of volunteering to do fundraising when we observe the ever-increasing demands on organisations in the not-for-profit sector like ours to professionalize. We now have to work in a world that obliges us to build our competences to obtain results that in days gone by would have been nothing other than the logical consequence of social relationships and friendships.

Volunteering implies dedication, generosity and conviction. Yet none of these qualities replace the need for essential economic means for even the simplest of projects. Nowadays, a project is only feasible if we think simultaneously about how it will be financed.

Isolated actions or those generated by urgent needs put strain on members of the association as well as those who have to deal with the demand. For this reason, in the mid- or long-term, the results are poor or non-existent.

Sometimes we obtain good short-term results, which can seem like a true success and so we think we have achieved our objective. However short-term thinking and for example, using only the money raised during the most recent campaign as the sole source of finance can turn out to be a factor that threatens the long-term economic sustainability of any association.

Sustainability in our associations does not mean we must have everything we need at our disposal. That would be impossible: it’s more a question of relying on a necessary infrastructure to attract and obtain the material, human, interpersonal, promotional and (very clearly) economic resources we need.

In return actions that refer back to a strategic plan and are defined by consensus between the members of the association help strengthen the stability of the institution’s financial base.

(Strengthening the second horse).
Voluntary work requires, among other things, a lot of time, effort and hard work which must be made up for by securing funds in a cost-effective manner.

According to the lessons and seminars being given by numerous associations, this process necessitates competences in management and leadership. (Professionalism).

It would be a good idea to establish partnerships with people or organisations that share the same way of thinking and are involved in similar activities. In this way it would be possible to show governments and the general public what role associations like ours play in society.

As a result, it is important and necessary to be consistent, transparent and to produce accounts. How?

**Through sincerity and ethical integrity**, which are essential when fundraising.

First and foremost, during a fundraising campaign, there must be no doubt about the integrity of the organisation, as well as its range of activities and projects and their positive

*United efforts*

*Building relationships with related people or institutions*
outcomes. Potential donors very quickly become aware of a lack of sincerity, honesty and transparency when it concerns “their” donations.

**Honesty cannot be called into question.** The overall positive objectives of the organisation must not be compromised by employing questionable means to attain them. This level of integrity is essential for the viability of the association, the fulfilment of our project and the good of the community.

Consequently, all fundraising efforts will be hampered if the association or its members are not perceived as people who are completely responsible in their actions.

Support from the community must be strengthened in order to achieve long-term social change.

To this end, we must:

- Recognise and thank them.
- Circulate reports showing our progress (What have we achieved?).
- Keep accounts.
- Be able to provide complete financial reports to any one at any time (transparency).
- Be able to show records demonstrating exactly how funds have been used (including gifts-in-kind).

**Identifying our Network of Donors**

The larger our donor base, the better we are able to face up to economic changes and other external factors that we are very familiar with at the moment.

Identifying our potential network of donors will allow us to determine which leaders in different sectors should be included in fundraising activities. We should start by identifying the people and organisations that are closest to
fundraising

We won’t have any charitable projects if we don’t think about how to finance them. In addition, it’s possible that they will attract others who are sympathetic to our cause.

That’s why the team in charge of fundraising at the heart of AIC needs new members who can actively participate by sharing their own background and culture.

Who is familiar with our association’s donor network?

♦ Has our association gained the respect and trust of this network, and that of the government and other institutions?

♦ Are our supporters being kept up to date with our progress, needs and objectives?

♦ Have we devoted time to making the general public aware of our cause?

We need to get many more people involved, dedicate time and money and focus our efforts on these issues.

We won’t have any charitable projects if we don’t think about how to finance them.
We can’t expect the institutional horse to start galloping next to the other automatically without training it first.

Raising awareness of our work and inviting other people to participate in it is a task in itself. So in the same way as there are people in our association who work in canteens, retirement homes, hospitals, shelters etc., we need people whose ongoing responsibility (and not only when there are emergencies) is to find the resources we need to fulfil our mission. In other words, development doesn’t happen by chance, we need to go out and seek it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From whom do we currently receive financial or other support?</th>
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The association needs to be able to make the best of its resources in order to progress and provide the best possible service, which will manifest itself as social advancement.

Now let’s address the **mobilisation of resources** – something we need to do to develop our actions so we can achieve our objectives.

Currently, experts on the subject are thinking beyond fundraising in the strictest sense of the word; the mobilisation of resources is one of the fundamental areas that an association like ours must not neglect.

If we don’t know what we want and what we need to get there, the idea of mobilising resources loses all meaning.

To meet the needs of the association, we need people who are ready to take on all the essential roles. If this is not the case, we have to find them because if no one wants to take responsibility for fundraising, we won’t obtain any finance. Because of course donors aren’t going to come knocking on our door by themselves...
When we think about our wishes and our needs, these issues might seem obvious, but it’s not so easy to resolve them. This is one of the main reasons why we need to set up a process of **strategic planning**.

Without such a process, those in charge of the associations have little chance of meeting their objectives or knowing when and where they departed from their aims. However this process would allow them to get back on track and still achieve the expected success.

Strategic planning is about organising civil society. It’s a particular way of thinking and seeing things, an «ideology» that can bring together a group of people so they can organise themselves according to identified objectives.

For example, think back to the Institutional Reinforcement of AIC in 2001.

Three principles or directives govern strategic planning when it is applied to an association like ours:

- **Mission**: Endeavouring to fulfil the wishes of our founder Saint Vincent de Paul. This is the very essence of our association. It’s a question of seeing how these wishes can be transformed into concrete actions.

- **Vision**: This makes us look towards the future. We imagine what we want things to be like in a few years’ time.

- **Values**: These are the convictions that will define the actions that we need to accomplish to fulfil our mission and make the vision we have a reality.
But strategic planning doesn’t stop there; we also have to draw up methods to evaluate our activities, as well as indicators and tools to help us work out whether in reality we are respecting what we have established.

That’s why we must know clearly what we want and what we need to achieve it. We must equally think about the amount of time allotted to achieve our objectives and so be able to use indicators that will show us how far along we have come.

Once we have a clear idea what we need, we have to look at how we can get it and it is this that we must try to develop as an association.

Why is it important for our organisation to be able to count on resource-generating activities? There are two main reasons:

**To ensure the future of our association.**

In all our activities, we have to consider the mechanisms that guarantee the sustainability of our association and ensure that we can continue to offer our services in the long-term.

**To increase our social value.**

It is not just a question of acting, but rather of increasing our social value, so we need to have the means necessary to continue to progress as an association, while attracting more and more people.

This is very important not only for the resources we obtain and the number of volunteers but also and especially in order to fulfil our mission.

So fundraising constitutes an important part of strengthening our social organisations. **Fundraising is a task to which everyone must contribute and take responsibility**, in their way and at their level.
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There are a good number of sources of finance that can help our association with its projects and it is our responsibility to be familiar with them and analyse which ones agree with our principles.

**Sources of Finance:**

*The association is gathering together resources (in order to continue to generate more revenue):* Contributions, concessions, sale of services and/or products, tombolas, events (concerts).

**Contributions**

Contributions constitute an important part of the revenue of some associations. They ask for a modest sum from their beneficiaries in exchange for their services.

In the case of AIC International and its national associations, members are asked to pay a contribution in return for the rights and responsibilities they enjoy as part of the organisation.

For AIC International, these membership fees make an important contribution to the smooth-running of the association: management, training, coordination, exchanges etc.

They are also important for other reasons. How could we dare to ask someone else for money if we don’t even make a contribution ourselves? This behaviour gives the impression that it’s not so important for us to pay our share. If we don’t make our own contribution to our association, it will be difficult to make the idea credible to others.

*Fruitful and dynamic projects* (For example: A manual labour workshop which generates revenues for women and for the centre that organises the workshop).
Sources of finance external to the association: Governments, trusts and foundations, businesses, individuals, financial support from international organisations etc.

Ideally our association would obtain funds from a wide range of bodies in the different community sectors cited above.

Once the sources of finance have been identified, the process of incorporation into the association begins.

1. Realise that fundraising is a task in itself and have it in place for the long-term.
2. Understand the needs and motivations of others when making contributions to different causes.
3. Create bonds of friendship and trust.
4. Promote our organisation and its cause.
5. Respect a code of ethics.

All these elements help us create a development project.
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Point One

Fundraising is a process that requires time and patience. It’s not about finding donors who will make a one-off donation but really creating a relationship with them from the first time we make contact and then maintaining it.

To what extent do we content ourselves with simply looking at the economic results, losing sight of the fact that beyond fundraising, what we need is to maintain good relationships with the people involved in our project? Those who, year after year, will continue to make their contribution to support the projects our association develops.

What does your association do to organise and ensure that fundraising is planned and thought-through? What do you think it could start doing?

Let’s ask ourselves these questions:

- What are the needs of my association?
- As volunteers, do we share and understand the vision and needs of the association?
- Do we agree about the need to fundraise?
- What objectives do we want to achieve when looking for funds?
- Have we done fundraising in the past? If so, how?
- What financial and human resources can we devote to fundraising?
- What are our limitations, financially or otherwise? For example, can we rely on staff and/or volunteers who have experience or an interest in fundraising?
- Who are our potential donors? etc...
Point Two

It is important to consider the needs of others, as well as the motivations of potential donors and those who we can already rely on to make contributions and participate in different causes. This will increase our chances of success when we approach a donor.

Types of Donors

The profile of the traditional donor who has been supporting charitable associations since the 1970s or 80s is changing. His or her characteristics are different to those of the new generation of donors.

The new generation of donors (aged 30-40):

- Doesn’t feel guilty about its state of well-being.
- Distrusts large institutions and leads a life of modern individualism.
- Supports an association if it believes that positive results are obtained and fixed objectives are achieved.
- Uses ever less “paper” forms to communicate and make payments and is happy to make an online donation.

These two types of donors need to be sent different messages, always adapted to their preferences:

The first group is more sensitive to the continuity and protection of the association’s values.
The second is more interested in knowing that their money is being well-used and positive results are being obtained. It is consequently necessary to explain to them how their money is going to be spent.

**Point Three**

The key word in the fundraising process is trust. Donors are not only giving us money but also their personal information. As for us, we receive their donations and are responsible for using them properly. In other words, it is necessary to create a bond of friendship with our “benefactors”.

**Point Four**

It is necessary to be familiar with all levels of the association and not just our local project. We need to be aware of its needs, its activities and its projects. We should remember that wherever we go, we represent an image of the association. So the better we explain its needs and objectives, the easier it will be for us to meet potential donors.

**What can I do to achieve this? What can my group do?**

**Point Five**

We are responsible for maintaining a good relationship between donors and the association. We suggest following a code of ethics which has been agreed beforehand in order to create a culture of trust.

In 2006, directives were drawn up at an international level regarding activities linked to fundraising.

“INTERNATIONAL STATEMENT OF ETHICAL PRINCIPLES IN FUNDRAISING”;
(www.afpnet.org/Ethics/IntlArticleDetail.cfm?ItemNumber=3681)
Steps to follow in Fundraising.

After having considered all the aforementioned aspects in the search for donors, it seems appropriate to set out the following steps.

I. Identification of “prospects” (potential donors)

II. Research on “prospects” and donors

III. Build bridges and integrate donors into the association

IV. Requests or applications, mechanisms for obtaining funds

V. Giving thanks and recognition

1. Identification of “Prospects” (Potential Donors)

*Approaching and integrating donors into the association.*

*Trying to make friends rather than just seeking funds.*

Before approaching anyone, it is important to know to whom we are going to be addressing ourselves. This is why we need to prioritise the identification of our “prospects” and donors.

If the association doesn’t keep a list of them, the recommendation is to think first about the people who we already know and who are close to us, such as our friends,
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family, neighbours, partners and the volunteers or other people who have an existing link with our organisation and then following this, the businesses with which we already have a relationship.

“We should never take it as a given that certain people will not make a donation, because sometimes we could be wrong”.

2. Researching “Prospects” and Donors

This is the basis for creating, preserving and developing a long-term relationship with the donor – to strengthen it in the future is to make it grow.

It is clear that if a volunteer wants to approach a donor, she has to be informed about them. It is important that she knows who this person she is going to contact is. She must gather sufficient information about them to be able to work out what their competences and potential interests are so that they will agree to make a donation and be won over to the cause.

3. Research on Principle Characteristics

The volunteer should find as much information as possible and select the data which the association needs in order to establish a link with the donor and so build a long-term relationship. Personal relationships are an excellent way of doing this.

It’s true that people make donations to recipients who seem pleasant and who they trust, and to causes that are dear to them.

4. Building Bridges and Integrating Donors into the Association

This activity begins as soon as potential donors have been found and continues with existing donors. The principle aim is to create a relationship. In this way, the donor doesn’t just
make a donation to the association but also feels involved and included in our institution.

Consequently, this step helps us to make potential or existing donors into friends of the organisation and its members. (For example: Friends of AIC). This works just as well for individuals as it does for organisations, businesses and foundations. It is vital to be familiar with their criteria and to understand that personal relationships - the sympathy or trust of senior staff - are important.

What do you think about this? What has your experience been? Where do you find and obtain finances?

5. Requests or Applications

After having collected the necessary information, we should know the best way of asking someone to make a donation. There are many different ways of doing this and we should analyse which will work best given the characteristics of our association, the experience that we have had in the field of fundraising, etc...

6. Giving Thanks and Recognition

It is vital that we say “thank you”.

When donors give something to our association, they create a relationship with us. This relationship could be short- or long-term, it depends on the way that we thank them and how we include them in the organisation.

Giving thanks is one of the most important aspects of fundraising. We can say thank you in different ways. In addition to thanking them, we can ring them up by telephone, invite them to an event, let them visit our offices or see some projects, etc.
Interesting items include photographs and case studies which are also both well received by donors, individuals as much as businesses or organisations, which may even publish them in their newsletter.

We should remember that everyone is different and they like being thanked in different ways. The more personal the recognition, the more the donor will feel valued. For example, some donors might be offended by a public thank you, while others may be flattered.

How do we give thanks in our association when we receive a donation?

Now we have gained an awareness of the fundraising process, let’s discuss how we can create a programme to make it a reality. This diagram shows us the steps we need to plan in order to set up our programme:
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Development Programme

- **Arguments in our favour**
- **Goals**
- **Prospects**
- **Strategies**
- **Work plan**
- **Schedule and resources**

- **Arguments in favour of the Association**: Why should people contribute to our association?

- **Goals**: What objectives do we want to receive as a result of our development programme? We need to focus our aims on resources and efficiency.

- **Potential Donors**: We need to split them up into groups according to different criteria.

- **Strategies**: When and how are we going to ask them to make a donation?

- **Work Plan**: After reading of the previous pages, it is easy to imagine the structure of the programme in the form of a table.

- **Schedule and Resources**: After setting out the objectives and the other steps, we can create a schedule which takes into account our resources.

**Now we are going to look at the uses of this programme:**

- To analyse different aspects of the association, such as clearly defining its vision and mission, its strong points and areas for improvement.

- To mobilise the organisation in order to exchange ideas and work in the same direction.
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- To define the resources that the organisation needs to work.
- To increase the organisation’s credibility in order to attract potential investors.
- To determine the feasibility of projects, strategies and needs, and their impact.

In order to be able to institutionalise this process, we need to be able to depend on people who are qualified to do the roles specified. It is therefore necessary to form a good working group with the competences required to fulfil each of the tasks outlined. **In other words, we ought to form a solid and qualified team.**

Business leaders or external collaborators could also become part of the team to bring a touch of professionalism to the organisation.

The development programme must also take into account:

- The activities to be undertaken
- Deadlines
- The people designated as responsible
A Final Thought:

Sometimes genius comes from things that are simple but function well in an organisation. So it is important to look for innovation in simple and practical things.

We must also understand that all processes require time, perseverance and a big commitment.

Often we have to overcome mental barriers and prejudices. Indeed it is for the most part the organisations themselves which are resistant to innovations.

We know that some of our associations have created innovative fundraising activities and it’s not so much the total raised that matters but the originality and the efficiency of the action as well as its impact on the visibility of AIC.

A Strong Motivation to Work:

We need to maintain a level of consistency; we can’t ask others to do what we are not prepared to do ourselves.

“The success of our results depends on:

- Organisation
- Commitment
- Responsibility from the human resources involved”.
International Association of Charities
AIC aisbl

An essentially feminine association, operating on a global level with 200,000 volunteers in 52 countries.

Founded by Saint Vincent de Paul in 1617 to fight against all forms of poverty and injustice and to give women an active and recognised social role, in a spirit of solidarity.

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