

Chapter 8: Publicity and fundraising

8.1 OUTLINE OF CHAPTER

All NGOs will want to publicise themselves to different **audiences** and in different ways as reputable organisations with high impact programmes. One of the reasons, but by no means the only one, that publicity is important is to raise funds for the organisation. The links between publicity and fundraising are clear. But organisations also want to publicise themselves for other reasons, such as increasing their **membership base**, informing potential **beneficiaries** about the work that they do, and **networking** more effectively with other organisations.

This chapter provides guidance on how to achieve publicity for the organisation through written documents, branding, public events, use of the media, joining networks, and participating in conferences. More detailed advice is given on how to produce a **brochure** and a **newsletter**. Both publicity tools can be very helpful when trying to promote the organisation externally.

Guidance is also provided on how to develop a **fundraising plan** to ensure that the organisation has sufficient income to cover its programme as defined by its strategic plan, annual team work plan and annual budget.

8.2 EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND PUBLICITY

Good external relations through the exchange of information and networking are important for any organisation. All organisations need publicity so that they are known by the public. When starting to develop a **publicity strategy**, consider:

- *Who* does the organisation want to reach?
- *What* does the organisation want the public to know about it and its work?

Normally an organisation wants to be known first and foremost by its beneficiaries, service users or clients, and then by the government, other NGOs, funding agencies, local businesspeople and people living in the locality. These audiences will need different types of information about the organisation.

For example, the members need to know what services the organisation provides, such as workshops and training. The government will want to know what an organisation's mission is, who its beneficiaries are, and where the organisation is working. Funding agencies will want to know that the organisation is credible, has a good track record and is worthy of their financial support.

Again, each group will need to receive the information it needs in a **different format**. The members will need to hear from other members. Funding agencies usually prefer written information. If they visit the organisation's office briefly, they will want documentation to take away with them to read or for reference.

Many different tools can be used in a publicity strategy. Some of them are detailed below.

Written documents

These are good for visitors to the office and funding agencies who are accustomed to reading reports and documents. Different documents can be developed for different purposes. All of them should carry the organisation's full name, the name of a contact person, and contact telephone or fax numbers. Be sure to distribute the documents widely, not only from the office. Give some to international agencies, umbrella groups, and other organisations that may distribute them on behalf of the organisation.

Some useful documents for distribution include those listed in the box below.

PUBLICITY DOCUMENTS

The **governing document** provides useful information about how the organisation is governed, its aims, the powers of trustees and the way administrative arrangements (such as membership and meetings) are handled.

The **strategic plan** shows what the organisation is trying to achieve over the next three years and how it is doing this.

The **annual report** covers the organisation's accomplishments over the previous year. It might include photographs and case studies of work done; a summary of governing body members and their background and experience; a copy of the annual accounts (audited or not); and information about agencies that have donated funds.

An **organisational profile** shows the structure of the organisation, roles and responsibilities, and lines of authority from the governing body to any project staff employed at community level.

A **brochure** provides basic information about the organisation to encourage interest. It can be distributed by staff attending workshops, at publicity events, etc.

A **fact sheet** summarises the organisation and may include the mission statement, a list of completed activities, the structure of the organisation, its target group, etc.

Project brochures are more specialised. They describe an organisation's work in one area or sector, such as women's rights, and can be handed out at meetings to people with particular interests in the area of work.

Logos and branding

Anything that carries the organisation's logo or emblem will help others remember and identify it. Some examples include calendars, stickers, pins, hats, T-shirts, folders, or diaries. Signs or banners can also be used whenever appropriate to let people know that the organisation is working on a specific cause or issue. The emblem increases publicity among those who cannot read, as they associate the picture with the organisation.

Publicity events

Any event that an organisation sponsors can be used for publicity. Some examples are:

- **Open house**

Open the office to the public and invite them to meet the staff, see the office, and ask questions about the organisation and its work. Display banners and brochures, and show videos of programme activities while people network with each other.

- **Project launch or closing ceremony**

At the start of a project or major programme activity, invite people from that field to attend a small ceremony. For bigger projects, government officials or funding agency representatives can be invited to make speeches to attract more participants. Be sure to display banners, photographs and brochures, and to show videos of programme activities if these are available.

- **Local events**

When invited to attend local events related to the organisation's work, ask if banners or displays can be taken. Wear the organisation's T-shirt, if it has one, and let people know the name of the organisation and what it stands for.

Media

Media can cover special events that the organisation holds, or they can run general stories related to its work.

- **Television** has a wide audience, which may include beneficiaries and funding agencies alike. However, the message should be well prepared in advance, as coverage is often brief.
- **Newspapers** can give more attention than television to local events, although their target group will be different. They can also carry photographs of the events. Articles can be posted in the office and seen by many people.
- **Radio** also covers both beneficiaries and donors, and can be useful to spread information about recent activities.
- A **newsletter**. Produce a small newsletter that describes what the organisation is doing, or that reports on issues that its target group is concerned about.

Joining networks

Belonging to an umbrella or network organisation or sectoral working group of NGOs will allow the organisation more opportunities to publicise its work. Such bodies can also provide information about potential funding sources and upcoming visitors, and they can advertise the work of other organisations. In this way organisations benefit from the publicity an umbrella or network organisation is engaged in. Being a member of an umbrella group has another advantage: it can provide information about development issues that may influence programme work. Establishing formal partnerships with other organisations or signing memorandums of understanding may have the same result.

Conferences and workshops

Participation in conferences and workshops tells others that the organisation is active and interested in a particular topic. It can also help to inform people about the organisation's areas of work, and facilitate information sharing. Workshops are a good place to meet other people, including funding agency representatives, who share common interests.

Publicity through the office

An office can be used to publicise an organisation. Make display boards with information about the organisation, including its mission and organisational structure. In the project offices, display photographs of projects and keep them up to date as they develop. Assign a small space to display publicity documents and have some copies for visitors to take. Keep extra copies of the governing document, strategic plan, and other organisational documents available so that these can be given to people as and when requested.

8.3 PRODUCING A BROCHURE

A brochure is usually a single sheet of paper folded into three. It provides an overview of the organisation and is used to give people more information about it. It is the easiest publicity document to develop, and is also very inexpensive. For those reasons, most NGOs have a brochure.

The box below gives some tips on producing a brochure.

PRODUCING A BROCHURE

- Appearance and layout are extremely important. If the words do not fit on the page or if the paper is not folded neatly, then your organisation will not look very professional.
- Try different font (typeface) styles and sizes if the organisation does not have a colour printer. A brochure that is all the same style can be boring. But do not use too many different styles, because that can be confusing. Try to make all of the headings the same style, and all the captions the same style.
- Pictures attract interest, but be sure that they are clear. A fuzzy picture or one that is not related to the text will make the reader confused. Always use captions.
- Use numbered or bulleted lists to give information for ease of reading. These lists are especially good if you want to list the organisation's objectives, projects or funders.
- Do not try to fit too many words on to the brochure. If the reader thinks it is going to take a long time to read, he or she may just put it away.
- Try to arrange the brochure creatively. For example, if possible, include a photo, a table or chart, some text, a numbered or bulleted list, and different colours.
- Always use a spellcheck and proofread the brochure; have someone check the English.

8.4 PRODUCING A NEWSLETTER

A newsletter is excellent for an NGO with a lot of information it wants to share. Resource NGOs, networking groups, and umbrella organisations could all have successful newsletters. Producing a newsletter may seem like a big task, but it does not have to be produced every month. Once every three months may be sufficient, at least to start with. Also, a newsletter does not have to be long: start with one side of paper. If a member of staff is familiar with Microsoft Word, a good quality newsletter can be designed using tables and columns. More advanced computer users can produce a newsletter in Microsoft Publisher.

NEWSLETTER DESIGN TIPS

- When designing a newsletter, use only two fonts (typefaces).
- Always use the same font for all headings or headlines. Keep the same size as much as possible, and always match the format (italics, bold, etc) in the headlines.
- Always use the same font for all articles. Make sure that the font used for the main text (stories and articles) is clear and easy to read.
- Make sure that the margins (space round the edges of the page) are equal.
- Don't try to cram too much text onto the page.
- To make text cover a bigger space without increasing the font size, use line spacing.

The most important thing to remember when designing a newsletter is that the aim is to encourage people to read what is written. The tips below are helpful to keep in mind when writing articles to reach the broadest possible audience.

CONTENT AND STYLE

- Try to write using as few commas as possible. They make sentences longer. Keep sentences as short as possible.
- Likewise, keep the paragraphs short.
- Begin with the story itself. The first line can be an expansion of the headline. Give facts about what happened in chronological order.
- Link the story to any other stories in the newsletter, past or present.
- Try to use figures, such as the number of people who attended, the dates of the conference, the amount of money donated, etc.
- If there is space, give more background information about something in the story. For example, the organisation that was involved in the story (contact person, date the organisation was founded, what other activities it has carried out, what happened for this event last year, etc) can be described.
- Include how to get more information on the story or about that event, if applicable. If the organisation has a phone number, list that.
- Be sure to number each issue of the newsletter consecutively.

8.5 DEVELOPING A FUNDRAISING PLAN

Most organisations will need to develop a fundraising plan if they are to achieve their priorities.

What is the purpose of fundraising?

It is important to clarify the purpose of a fundraising strategy which might, for example, be to:

- Diversify and increase the number of different income sources the organisation has.
- Develop and expand, or consolidate and maintain, the existing workforce and programme or service.
- Reduce financial dependency on funds received from any one source or any international funding agency.
- Enhance long term organisational sustainability.

It is advisable to reach a **shared definition** of the aims of any fundraising before developing a strategy paper or plan.

Analysis of present funding

To determine what the organisation's financial resource needs are it is necessary to analyse present income in terms of amount, source (agency providing the funds), period of time (eg a three-year grant from 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2006) and budget components covered by the funds if these are specified. It is also important to note the details of any anticipated future funding if they are known.

	AMOUNT	SOURCE/AGENCY	TIME FRAME	BUDGET LINES COVERED
1. GUARANTEED				
2. ANTICIPATED				

Once the picture of guaranteed and anticipated funds is clear, the **gaps** in terms of what budget items are covered and those not covered can be identified and analysed and a plan can be developed to meet the gaps.

How to start developing a fundraising plan

A good place to start is by building on what experience has shown works best. Take some time to reflect on and discuss what has worked best for the organisation to date in its fundraising.

For example, this process may suggest that the following methods are advisable:

- Explore further the range of existing personal contacts that the organisation has with funding agencies.
- Compile (and regularly update) a list of potential funders and mail the agencies on the list regularly with information about the organisation and what it is trying to do.

The following questions are helpful when attempting to identify potential funders.

QUESTIONS ABOUT FUNDING AGENCIES

- Does the organisation work in the same sector?
- Has it funded the organisation before?
- Has it funded other local NGOs before?
- Is the budget in line with the resources that the funder has available, and does it fall within the limits set on funding applications?
- Under what conditions does the funding body accept applications from local NGOs?
- Is the agency known to your NGO? How?
- Does your NGO already have an established relationship with the funding agency?
- Does the agency work in the same geographical area?
- Does it work with target groups similar to yours?
- Are the agency's aims and values consistent with those of the organisation?

What does successful fundraising take?

Designing a fundraising strategy is not as straightforward as is sometimes thought. Some factors that need to be considered are given in the box below.

INVESTMENT

Fundraising demands considerable investment of time, money and commitment. This means dedicating a certain amount of staff time to fundraising, to building external contacts that may yield new funds and servicing new external relations. The greater the number of funding agencies that support an organisation, the more time it will need to administer, manage and report on funds.

STRATEGIC AIMS

All fundraising should be oriented towards achieving the strategic aims even though some funding agencies will have their own specifications about what they can and cannot fund. Given this, it is important to research what types of programme different funding agencies support, and then to approach those that look the most likely.

DOUBLE FUNDING

Care is needed to ensure that funds are raised from different agencies for either distinct components of the budget or the whole programme and budget. It will be necessary to demonstrate in financial reports to funding agencies that nothing is being 'double funded'.

CORE RECURRENT COSTS

Many funding agencies are reluctant or unable to fund core organisational costs, especially running costs such as staff salaries, office rent, etc. Most prefer to fund direct programme activities. However, they are usually able to consider contributing a portion of the core costs outlined in the organisational budget. For example, a funding agency might contribute 15 per cent towards the costs of a Programme Officer and five to 10 per cent towards the organisation's overall management costs and office expenses.

ONE PROGRAMME/ONE BUDGET APPROACH

It is best to give funding agencies a copy of the annual budget (linked to the strategic plan and annual team work plan) rather than to prepare separate budgets either for each agency that is approached or for each project. This way potential funders will be able to see exactly what parts of the budget they are being asked to fund. In addition, financial reporting will be streamlined because the organisation will have only one set of accounts. However, in some cases it may be necessary to approach a funding agency for specific (earmarked) funds for a special project or activity (eg a conference). For guidance on developing a project budget, see Chapter 6 (Managing projects).

Some fundraising strategies

Funds can be raised from many sources, including those outlined below.

- **Grants/project funds** provided by international funding agencies and international NGOs. Before approaching such agencies it is a good idea to consider:
 - Which elements of the programme might best be marketed to potential international funders?
 - Reporting requirements might increase, although it is often possible to incorporate additional requirements into existing reporting systems.
 - Fund administration and management will increase.

- **Income generation**

Attempting to generate funds through specific events or initiatives such as training workshops or fundraising events usually requires a great deal of staff time and effort for small returns, especially for smaller organisations. However, the added value lies in publicity for the organisation which may help boost other fundraising initiatives.

- **User charges**

The introduction of charges for **direct services** especially if these are currently provided free of charge raises questions about the rights and wrongs of charging for services that should be available to the public free of charge. It is difficult to combine corporate, business principles which are rooted in profit and commercial enterprise with NGO values designed to promote inclusion, participation, access and social benefit.

Charging for **indirect services** might be an option for some organisations, but opportunities for this are often limited. For example, some organisations hire out rooms in their office for out-of-hours meetings. Others charge consultancy fees for advice given to, for example, other agencies.

- **Private, individual donations**

Some organisations canvass **small individual donors** by including a donations slip at the bottom of all their brochures or leaflets. However, there may be legal and other constraints on this practice. In addition, it is usually necessary to explain in brief what the donated money will be used for. Again, the organisation would need to be confident that it has the administrative capacity to deal with such donations.

Identifying and building sustainable relationships with **large individual donors** can yield significant returns, sometimes on a regular and enduring basis. However, this is not easy for a small organisation with a small (albeit possibly growing) reputation. It is difficult to inspire the confidence of such donors. And it is not always easy to identify individuals, for example, in the business sector, with a particular interest in supporting the work of the organisation.

Before embarking on a strategy to canvass the support of individual donors it is wise to experiment by, for example, compiling a targeted mailing list and sending out an information pack to the individuals or organisations on the list. The secret of success, however, appears to lie in personal contact, both initial and continuous, with sponsors. This is very demanding on organisations with limited people resources.

- **Corporate giving**

A significant and growing number of corporations and businesses (large and small) have established 'social investment funds' or 'community funds' which carry both tax and social benefits for them. Most of these funds are devoted to specific areas of activity, but some are more flexible and open ended.

A good starting point with this option is to develop a detailed list of 'possible target companies'. Once this has been compiled the organisation might consider:

- sending out an information pack
- following up the mailing with a personal visit to ask: 'How did you find the information that was sent to you? Are you interested in exploring the work of the organisation further?'
- inviting the relevant person to an informal information session at the office with service users or beneficiaries, or to visit project staff and beneficiaries at a nearby project site
- personal follow up with those who attended the informal session.

The most important thing to remember about fundraising is that it takes time, energy and perseverance. The options detailed should always be considered carefully in terms of the inputs they will require if they are to yield the desired results.

8.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided some guidance on how best to develop a strategy to publicise the organisation and its programmes, and how to start developing a strategy for raising funds. The two are linked in the sense that organisations with a high profile and a good reputation tend to attract funding much more easily than those that are less well known. However, one of the best advertisements for an organisation is the quality of its programme, which in turn is intimately linked to how well it is managed.