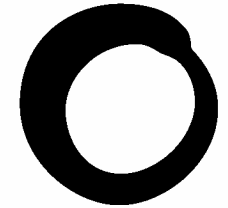


# 7 Steps in building relationships with funders



**Friends of  
the Earth**

## 1. Finding your funder

- Interests – **what** kind of things does the funder like to give money to? Do your research. Get an idea of who and what they have given to before. Will the funder give you a list of past grants? What have you heard the individual has given to before? Look on the internet, in local papers, philanthropy websites. Try to find out as much as you can about their individual interests and then see where they fit into where you need money. Try to find the links between what the funder has already given to and what you are doing. E.g. if a local philanthropist has given money to a local hospital – perhaps they might be interested in a health related campaign of yours? Are you working against an incinerator – does your campaign tackle health impacts? Are you trying to reduce traffic pollution in your area – does your campaign tackle health impacts?
- Try to get a good idea of what amounts the funder usually gives and therefore what kind of money it would be realistic for you to ask for.
- Motivations – **why** do they give money? To make themselves feel better, because they can claim tax back, because their family was affected by the issue? Ask them, look in local papers or on the internet for information, ask local people.
- Capacity – **how much** money do they have?
- Guidelines and criteria – **when** is the application deadline, who should it be sent to, what form do you need to fill in?

## 2. Can they give money to us?

- **How much** can you realistically ask for? There is no point in asking one funder for £5k when their largest grants are normally £1.5k. What part of your campaign should you ask for? Does the funder like to give money to an entire campaign or just a part of it?

## 3. Planning

- **Plan** carefully how you are first going to approach the funder. How will you get them involved/ interested in your campaign? How will you let them know about you? What will you do next? Have a detailed itinerary for each step in your funding strategy. Make sure you do not miss deadlines.

#### 4. Getting the funder involved in your work

- **Inspire** the funder: invite him/ her to a group meeting, pop along to your stall, come to a local meeting where you will be speaking, visit a local school with you to see a talk, come to an event or awareness raising day, invite them to meet you/ members of the local group to learn about the project that you feel will most interest them (based on your research).

#### 5. Asking for the money

- Have a meeting with the funder and stick to the date! – see the handout on meeting a donor. Make sure that you are meticulously well planned – this may be your only chance to get face to face with the funder to sell your excellent work.
- If you cannot meet the funder - send your completed application form or proposal, on time!

#### 6. Saying thank you!

- Thank the donor with a letter as quickly as you can (no more than 2 days after the donation)
- Call if you think that the thank you letter is going to be delayed/ call to thank for large gifts. If the funder has not yet met you or seen the project
- Reciprocate the gift - make the donor feel good/ special. Be warm and genuine
- Personalise the letter as much as possible – refer to their reasons for giving money, pick out their interests
- Give the funder information on WHAT you plan to send them in the future and when.
- Tell them what their gift is going towards in terms of human benefits/ realistic outcomes. Talk about people/ real life stories

#### 7. Keeping the funder up to date and loved

- Ask them how often they like to receive information and how – by email/ letter/ phone (allow the donor to set the level of communication – a Charitable Trust or Foundation may set their own)
- Think how the funder can get involved? Invite them to an event/ action/ meeting/ seminar/ open day
- Call/ write/ report back/ send press releases/ photos/ press cuttings/ **thank them** with updates on the funded project as well as what other exciting work the group is doing/ meet the funder and tell them about your amazing work and the successes it has had. A success can be anything from talking to your local authority to reaching out to X members of your local community with information. Try to get in touch with the donor in some way at least every four months, depending on how much they said they would like to hear from you. Some funders like to be regularly updated and others simply like a 6 month bulletin.
- Invite views/ opinions. Ask the donor what **they** think about your work. Ask them for their input. Make them feel involved and in the loop.
- Keep the donor involved – particularly in the first year of giving. The donor is more likely to repeat giving year after year
- Tell the donor about the results of your work: how this helped **people** in your community, what difference their help has made.
- Start to educate the donor about other areas of your work. Let them know about all the other excellent things you are doing.