

Grassroots Fundraising Journal

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A PUBLICATION OF



Building Our Collective Resources



No Staff? No c3 Status? No Problem! ■ Fundraise to Build Community
Training Exercise: Mapping Our Experiences ■ Top Crowdfunding Sites

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10 Training Exercise: Mapping Our Experiences

GIFT and FIERCE

Lack of knowledge isn't what usually stands in the way of being comfortable with fundraising—prior negative experiences and fears are. Use this fun and simple activity to bring these experiences into the open and move your fundraising past these limitations.



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ACT UP Philadelphia members march from City Hall to a nearby hotel where President Obama and Mayor Nutter were speaking, to demand funding for housing and treatment for people with HIV. In this issue's feature article, ACT UP members share the secrets of their fundraising success despite having no paid staff or 501(c)(3) status for the last 25 years.



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Resourcing is a new way to think about fundraising that moves beyond just getting the money, but draws on many resources—of belonging, nurturance, and regeneration—from one's community. This shift helps us move beyond old attitudes and traumas related to money to see fundraising as a life-giving source for our work.



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Thinking Outside the Box

Priscilla Hung

AS WE GET CLOSER TO THE END OF THE YEAR, I tend to hear a lot more lamenting from us fundraisers. Bemoaning budget goals that are unlikely to be met. Year-end campaigns that aren't bringing in as many dollars as the previous year. Counting down the dwindling number of available days to squeeze in one more night of phone banking or one more series of emails. And because we are tired and stressed, we tend to be glass-half-empty people right about now.

That's why I love this issue of the *Journal*. The focus is on how we can build on our collective resources, strengths, and experiences to further our fundraising—and how to do this without all of the nonprofit trappings that we've been taught to think are necessary for success, like 501(c)(3) status, paid staff, and professional fundraisers who focus on hitting the numbers. What if we took away the strictures placed on us by the nonprofit-industrial complex? What would we be left with to carry out our work?

This issue of the *Journal* provides you with inspiration and perspective to answer those questions. We kick off with the folks at ACT UP Philadelphia sharing concrete tips on how they get the funds and resources needed to carry out their work as an active all-volunteer group. Next, Susan Raffo introduces us to the concept of “resourcing” (as opposed to “fundraising”), and shares thoughts on how this holistic approach can help us move beyond money trauma to embrace all the ways we can resource our work.

To accompany that new perspective, we offer up a training exercise that has been designed by GIFT and FIERCE on how to ground your fundraising team in their prior experiences to make their current fundraising activities less stressful and more effective. We round out this issue with an article on crowdfunding, a form of online fundraising that has gained popularity beyond the nonprofit sphere and that offers tools that are accessible for all types of funding projects.

This issue marks the last issue of our 30th anniversary year. It reminds me of all the different forms the *Journal* has taken over the past three decades: starting as a volunteer effort, going on to become part of a for-profit, then becoming a California nonprofit, and now being part of GIFT. One thing hasn't changed, though, over all these years: it's still a labor of love that relies on its community to survive and thrive. Thank you for a wonderful 30 years. See you in 2012!

The cost of publishing the *Journal* is covered solely by subscriptions and donations made by people like you.

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ACT UP members, along with people from Health GAP and other organizations, stage a political funeral outside the White House on World AIDS Day (Dec. 1st) 2010. They were calling for more funding for AIDS programs at home and abroad. Photo by Kaytee Riek.

No Staff? No c3 Status? No Problem!

Kaytee Riek, Che Gossett, Max Ray, and Virg Parks

IT'S NOT ALWAYS EASY BEING A RADICAL ACTIVIST collective without 501(c)(3) status and without paid staff. You're limited in the foundations you can apply to, and people are sometimes hesitant to give you money because they don't get a tax write-off. You're not eligible for government grants, and most corporations don't support direct action.

Yet organizations all over the country that are not official nonprofits manage to eke out a living with creative strategies to raise money. ACT UP Philly—which works on behalf of people affected by the AIDS epidemic—is one of those organizations.

Even on our limited budget (less than \$20,000 a year), we've managed to win amazing victories. We fought for Philadelphia to be one of the first cities with a government-supported syringe exchange; we pursued inside/outside organizing efforts with incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people with AIDS and with ACT UP members to pressure the prison commissioner into decriminalizing condoms in Philadelphia jails. We helped get funding in our state AIDS Drug Assistance Program so that people with HIV can get access to AIDS drugs as well as other important medications for heart disease and high cholesterol.

And with allies, we've fought to win billions of dollars in funding for AIDS treatment around the world, resulting in millions of people who would otherwise die getting access to medication.

Back in the 1980s, autonomous ACT UP groups sprouted up in most major cities. Some of them were well funded because they organized people with resources—in particular, wealthy, white gay non-trans men. Some also sought 501(c)(3) status.

Others, like ACT UP Philly, took a different approach to generating resources. We've always focused on organizing by and for people most directly affected by the AIDS epidemic: people of color, low-income people, current and former drug users, queer people, transgender people, formerly incarcerated people, and people with any combination of those identities.

We've never really had wealthy members who could bankroll our activism. Moreover, we will never accept money from drug companies, even though they give other AIDS activist groups thousands of dollars a year, because we know it would force us to censor our activism. The critiques of the nonprofit industrial complex and funding dependency that were so eloquently and radically voiced in the essays collected by INCITE! Women of

Color Against Violence in *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded* have formed a central understanding to the work of AIDS activists in ACT UP Philadelphia.

As a result, we've had to get creative, and we've become pretty good at it. As with many nonprofits, money is a constant issue in our group, and there are a lot of things that we are prevented from doing because we don't have enough money. Nevertheless, ACT UP Philadelphia has continued as a self-sus-

3. **Keep expenses low, and trade work for discounts (saves thousands of dollars a year).** Our office is in a collectively run activist space, and we pay a modest amount toward maintaining the space each month, basically our share of utilities and toilet paper. We do our best to make up the rest of the cost through working on the space: ACT UP members volunteer at the community library on the first floor, participate in work days, and hold events at the space

WE RAISE MONEY FROM AS MANY SOURCES AS WE CAN WITHOUT LETTING THOSE ACTIVITIES CUT BACK ON OUR ACTIVISM, AND WE KEEP OUR EXPENSES VERY LOW.

taining, thriving, and agitating consensus-based collective for 25 years with no paid staff and a dynamic AIDS activist strategy of civil disobedience and direct action that most foundations won't touch.

So, how do we do it—and how can you? Here are our top ten tips:

1. **Get a good fiscal sponsor (saves hundreds of dollars a year, and gets access to thousands).** A lot of foundations, and some larger donors who need a tax write-off, require that a group function under the umbrella of an existing 501(c)(3). Our fiscal sponsor is a local organization that does amazing direct service work but doesn't do much advocacy. They help us not only by being our fiscal sponsor, but by doing it for free—meaning they don't charge the usual fees a fiscal sponsor would—because they believe our work is fundamental to improving their clients' lives. They are responsive to our needs (they get us checks quickly, and they will write acknowledgment letters to large donors who need a tax write-off), but we've also learned not to ask too much from them. Since they don't take a percentage of the money coming in, as most fiscal sponsors do, we remember that they are doing us a favor and keep our requests to a minimum.
2. **Discuss every expense (saves hundreds of dollars a year).** At ACT UP Philly meetings, we vote on every single expense. Sometimes this means we have long discussions about whether we should spend \$20 on ink for the printer. But it saves us loads of money in the long run; members often have connections to cheaper options. So, instead of spending \$20 on ink, for example, we link up with people who have unused ink cartridges.
3. **Keep expenses low, and trade work for discounts (saves thousands of dollars a year).** Our office is in a collectively run activist space, and we pay a modest amount toward maintaining the space each month, basically our share of utilities and toilet paper. We do our best to make up the rest of the cost through working on the space: ACT UP members volunteer at the community library on the first floor, participate in work days, and hold events at the space
4. **Pass the hat at meetings (raises hundreds of dollars a year).** Our members come from all different backgrounds. Some are well-off, others broke. Some have two homes, others have none. But we invite all members to chip something in at every meeting, even if it's just 50 cents. Of course, no one is required to donate, but we've made it a routine to pass the hat at every meeting. Each week, we collect from \$10 to \$20 that goes toward buying food for the meeting. And whenever we have guests or a particularly crowded meeting, we make sure to pass a big hat and make a special pitch for why we need the money. These hats bring in about \$800 a year.
5. **Couple fundraising with action (raises hundreds of dollars a year).** Because ACT UP Philly is an action-oriented group, we don't usually get around to talking about fundraising until we run out of money. One strategy we've used to raise money while also taking action is to devise actions that raise money! For example, we held a 20th anniversary speak-out, inviting old members to come back, share stories, and learn what we're up to; and we raised money at the event. Even more directly, we've held

a bake sale outside a politician's office to raise money for global AIDS and used that money toward our campaign (it's worth noting that politicians cannot take money from us directly to fund a program). We've raised as much as \$500 this way.

6. **Have silly, and easy, fundraisers (raises hundreds of dollars a year).** Bigger organizations host serious fundraisers like galas and walk-a-thons. We go in the opposite direction—we have fundraisers that are actually fun and often quite silly. We once held a “sleep-a-thon,” where we stayed up all night watching Prince movies, and asked people to donate a certain amount for every hour we stayed awake. We auctioned ourselves, and our skills, off to friends (one member agreed to read a book to the winner while doing the winner's laundry). We had a “cock and tail” party where we invited people to get dressed up, then sold raffle tickets to win donated sex toys. We try to do two or three of these small, low-energy fundraisers a year because they keep us going emotionally and financially. Finally, every year we hold a raffle to raise the \$1,000 we need for ACT UP members to go to D.C. to participate in a lobby day for people with AIDS. We sell tickets for \$1 each to all our family and friends—at support groups, doctors' offices, other activist meetings, even at church or the local AIDS planning council. The grand prize? Either \$25 or a donated cheap electronic device. We raise about \$1,500 a year this way.
7. **Raise money for actions from individuals (raises hundreds of dollars a year).** Sometimes, we need to have an action that we didn't budget for, so we need to raise \$200 or \$1,000 quickly. In this case, we rely on our long list of former members and supporters to chip in. We send out email alerts and make calls asking people to donate. Because we've been around for so long and are well respected, people are generally willing to give if we don't ask more than twice a year. These requests bring in about \$1,500 each year.
8. **Apply for grants you know you can get (raises thousands of dollars a year).** Here's our secret to grant writing: rather than spending a lot of time writing grant proposals to foundations in the hope that we'll get money, we focus our energy on one or two foundations that have funded us in the past. Philly is lucky to have an activist community foundation that has funded ACT UP for years. So every year, we make sure to write that proposal. We write other proposals when members have time, but we don't make it a major priority. This means we don't have a lot of money,

but we can reliably budget for \$5,000 from a foundation. This strategy has the added bonus of not having to write a lot of grant reports!

9. **Partner up with better-funded organizations for supplies and in-kind donations (saves thousands of dollars each year).** ACT UP is lucky to have long-term relationships with a number of organizations whose members support us and turn out for our joint events. Each World AIDS Day, for example, we go to D.C. to protest at the White House in collaboration with several better-funded activist groups. Those groups pay for some of the buses that take our members, and we get local organizations that support us to pay for the rest. Then, we turn out as many people as we have funding for. It's a win-win situation that ensures we are able to mobilize for large actions, even without the budget to do it.
10. **Get stores to donate or let you raise money from their customers (raises hundreds of dollars a year).** It's amazing how many stores are run by ACT UP supporters. There's the radical bookstore that sells our buttons and shirts, and the sex toy store that donates items for our annual raffle. But perhaps our best example of businesses that help us raise money are the local gay bars (who love ACT UP members both because they support the cause and because they are regular customers) where, with advance permission from their managers, we walk around asking people for money. We did this one time with a friend who is a Sister of Perpetual Indulgence, and over the course of a night and six bars, we collected \$750!

In short, we raise money from as many sources as we can without letting those activities cut back on our activism, and we keep our expenses very low. We make fundraising fun and tie it to actions whenever possible. We never fundraise just for the sake of fundraising! Instead, we do it to raise money for an action or because someone volunteers to throw a party so we can hang out with each other outside of the work.

These strategies have worked for us, and we believe they can work for other activist groups in a similar situation. It may be hard for an activist group with no staff and no 501(c)(3) status to carry on, but it is possible to raise the money to fund the work and still win campaigns and improve people's lives. ■

The authors are all members of ACT UP Philadelphia, a nearly 25-year-old activist group committed to ending the AIDS crisis through direct action. ACT UP's current campaign is to force the City of Philadelphia to invest in housing for people with HIV.

Resourcing

Fundraising as Part of Supporting and Building Community

Susan Raffo

AT ITS MOST SIMPLE, FUNDRAISING IS ABOUT ASKING for money from a person or an institution so that an organization or project can accomplish its work. The rate of exchange is clear: dollars invested, work done. It should be as direct as asking someone to pass you the salt when you are at the dinner table or hand you your coat when you are leaving a room, but it is not. Every time we ask for money, or are asked for money, there are generations of ghosts circling the room as we speak. The ghosts are attached to the issue of money—and all of the things we have attached to it.

Here's a surprising thing: on an essential level, money doesn't really exist. It's a stand-in for goods and services. A kind of yellow Post-It note that says that the work you do has a certain worth within the community you are a part of, so you can exchange the value of your work for the value of someone else's work.

Here is another surprising thing: all money comes from something free and in abundance: sunlight. Everything we buy and sell, every material good, including our bodies and everything that our bodies do or make, owes its origins to sunlight. Through the magic of photosynthesis, sunlight is turned into energy, which then moves through a cycle that eventually becomes a computer screen, a rubber tire, a box of chocolates, or the skull sweat of a new idea.

All money has its origins as that sunlight (however many generations removed), which then has value attached to it. Money represents a valuation that only has power once it is in relationship to something else. In other words, a \$5 note is meaningless except for what it can do. And even then, it is meaningless unless it's in relationship to something else: desire,

longing, need, or strategy. At this point—this place where relationship comes in—is where money gets complicated.

Money is the same as the historical idea of race: a socially constructed concept that has evolved over time, not growing from biology but from the legacy of political and economic history, culture, family, and identity. It is not real in the sense of a piece of wood in your hands or the smell of a piece of chocolate, but something that is experienced through the systems and ideologies and behaviors that, too often in the case of race, end up as racism and white privilege. Money is just like that: a Post-It note or an electronic blip that doesn't really exist except for the systems and ideologies that manage or organize it.

And, just like racism and white privilege, the systems and ideologies around money are what cause problems. And just like racism and white privilege, these systems and ideologies exist not only in the realm of infrastructures and public policies, they also exist within us. We become them and they become us.

From an early age, we are taught relationships to money through individual experience as well as through family experience and teaching, culture, community, and everything else that has an effect on who we are. Most of us who grew up with the dominant attitudes about money prevalent in the US have some kind of tension or anxiety in relation to money.

That tension or anxiety takes a lot of different forms: we feel that we don't have enough money or we are afraid of not having enough. Or we are afraid of having too much or of wasting it. We worry about what we can afford to buy and struggle with wanting more than we have. We lie about money. We get into debt and don't tell people about it. We help support our parents or grandparents or siblings or partners or friends—or even

causes—and sometimes feel angry about doing so, wanting to keep our money for ourselves. We have inherited or are due to inherit and don't tell anyone. Money often carries secrets that we are careful to not share. "Money" has a thousand faces that change based on our histories and our hungers.

Sometimes this tension is expressed as shame or guilt or bragging, but if you scratch below those expressions, you often end up with some form of fear. This tension and the underlying fear are part of how the idea of money gets its power. It thrives on that space between what we have and who we are right now and what we desire or long for or want to be. For each of us, these attitudes and fears are passed down, generation after generation. We know them sometimes as culture, sometimes as family ritual, and sometimes as survival.

Fundraising carries with it every kind of struggle or desire that has not been met. It carries with it everything we have learned about being poor, about being rich, about asking for what you need, about not having enough. These reactions are completely aligned with systems of privilege and oppression, with cultural differences related to individual versus collective responsibility, and with personal experiences of desire and power. All of these reactions—and the systems they are built on—can get in the way of people doing fundraising, particularly people who did not grow up with the privilege and power that our culture grants those who have money.

GIFT was created to empower and support communities of color to identify and create strategies that will increase the resources flowing into those communities. GIFT was created because resources are disproportionately accessible between white folks and folks of color. The fact that this happens at all is, among other things, about trauma—historical trauma.

What Is Trauma?

First, take out of your mind the idea that "trauma" only refers to situations involving extreme violence. Without diminishing the impact of situations involving extreme violence, it is true to say that trauma is pretty common. Trauma is not an event by itself, it describes what happens to us because of the event.

Trauma occurs when we are deeply frightened and are physically trapped or believe that we are trapped. We freeze into a feeling of helplessness. If there is no way to release the experience or to integrate it, that frozen experience can create a sense of collapse, of defeat, or of immobility. This sense of collapse or defeat or immobility is then triggered every time something occurs that reminds us of that first feeling of being trapped. When that is triggered, we react in a number of ways: with anger, with grief, with a sense of helplessness. This is the core of deeply held

trauma. It's as common as dirt. And it has informed our families for generations back—the ways in which our families survived or didn't survive, how they parented us, modeled what it means to work and to love—all of these things are affected by generations of learning, of celebration, and of trauma.

Dr. Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, Oglala Lakota, used the term "historical trauma" when she referred to the impact of generations of genocide of Native communities, of targeted violence through the form of loss of land, of language, of culture, and of lives. She linked this historical trauma to the high rates of physical, social, and cultural struggles experienced in Native communities today.



Image Courtesy National Native American AIDS Prevention Center

Dr. Joyce DeGruy Leary's work uses the language of post-traumatic stress syndrome to talk about the intergenerational trauma of "post-traumatic slave syndrome," meaning the systematic dehumanization of African slaves as the initial trauma that was then passed down through generation after generation of both perpetrator (white families) and the descendants of those enslaved. The institution of slavery became trauma when US nationhood refused to face and then heal from the extent of this history.

Over generations, unresolved trauma becomes historical trauma. It mixes with and informs the individual experiences we have across our lifetimes, so that our actions and responses carry a constant mix of history and present time, each embedded in the other.

Trauma and Money

Our relationships to money are embedded with trauma and they are embedded with our history. Being a child and watching a parent stress about money, noticing the anxiety when the bills come through the door or when the creditors call on the phone, informs what money is to us as adults.

If we have experienced money used as control, as a way to maintain or take power, as a way to buy love, to prove yourself, to gain validation, to feel safe—these experiences inform how we show up around money today. And those individual childhood experiences are tied to larger collective histories: histories of doing without, histories of hunger, and histories of families who have experienced being an economic object, whether as worker or slave, with an autonomy forfeited for someone else's profit.

Money lives through systems and relationships, both individually and within our family and community histories. Money is not real by itself, and the system of how money is saved or spent is part of the story of the United States. There is trauma embedded in money systems, the trauma of our families and communities and how they were able to survive.

When we fundraise, we are working within those money systems. Those histories are part of how we think about resources, about having enough, about deserving to have our basic needs met, about how we ask for what we need and how we trust each other to provide. They are also part of how we envision our movements, our organizations, and our relationships to change.

Ending this cycle and experience of trauma is about building resiliency. It's about resourcing.

What Is Resourcing?

I use the term “resourcing” to encompass a way of thinking about getting what we need—beyond money. It's actually a biological term and refers to how the body, through the nervous system, takes care of itself. Over time, resourcing has also come to mean how the collective body, or community, takes care of itself.

Resourcing is the ability to feel nurtured and calm within yourself or your community, to feel good. If trauma is a raging river, then resourcing is the ability to rest and regenerate, the quiet beach along the side. The greater the legacy of trauma, the harder it is to resource. This is as true for the individual body as it is for the greater community. Resourcing is a kind of safety net that is needed for the body to release trauma. Without resourcing, we cannot release and then move away from the trauma.

Individual resourcing is what happens when we are able to bring our awareness and to accept something that feels nurturing, safe, pleasurable. This can happen as sensation within the body—such as how strong my legs feel or how warm my heart feels. It can happen through experiencing something outside of my body: the sun on my face, the smell of garlic, the sound of my daughter laughing. Or it can happen in response to an event: Eating a good meal with a group of people around a table

and feeling that you are in exactly the right place. Working on a project or a campaign with others and feeling the hum. This sensing and feeling and being the “good” thing is resourcing, and we can't heal or change without it.

The same works for communities. It's important to have spaces in life where we are surrounded by people with shared histories, shared language, and shared ways of being alive. Communities cannot heal or change without the space or ability to resource. Resourcing is always a radical act of self-reclamation.

Questions to Help You Think About Resourcing

What kinds of activities leave you feeling safe, happy or relaxed?

What kinds of practices or rituals does your community or culture practice that help you to feel grounded and happy?

Who are the people it feels good to connect with—by telephone, in person, or even over email?

What kinds of things have you done in the past that you truly enjoyed? What parts of your history, your culture, your community do you truly enjoy?

Resource Sharing and Fundraising

Resource sharing is about working from an organization or community's strengths and finding what is needed, within those strengths, to build that organization or community. Resource sharing builds on a nervous-system analysis of resourcing, meaning that resourcing should nurture our work, should contribute to the safety and sustainability of our communities. Resourcing is completely connected to healing from the trauma and struggles our communities carry. We cannot shift historical trauma without resourcing. Fundraising cannot be separate from that work of resourcing.

We live and work within a cash economy, where money is most often the standard of exchange. But the exchange of money through fundraising is not often envisioned in ways that resource our communities. Having money to pay for things is not the same as resourcing unless how that money comes through the door is tied to a feeling of nurturance, safety, and “goodness.”

So how do we resource our work rather than just get money for our work? And will we get enough to pay the bills?

Practices

When I first started to work on some of this material, I was mostly working for myself. It was a lot easier to think about these ideas: how to do them, what they looked like, and how they might support long-term change. Now that I am working as part of an organization, I see how hard working in this way is, how slow and incremental it is, how much the work must be thought of as for the long term. And for our nervous systems—meaning our ability to integrate new information so that we act or respond differently—slow slow slow is the best way. It's the only way to guarantee that change is a lasting thing.

These practices are offered as just that, practices that support thinking in 50-year chunks while also being open to the unexpected moments of transformation that surprise us.

First and first again: notice how your work is resourced. In this work, in your organization, in your community, what feels good? What feels right? This gets called so many things in the nonprofit world—strengths-based approaches and so on. Forget all of that and make it personal. What feels good and right and how do you make it grow?

Here is the groovy thing about nervous systems, indi-

afraid or confused, notice what you have. Notice your resources, your strengths, the “good” things and then see what happens to your thinking. Keep reminding each other of what money is, of what affects the asking for it, support each other, and then go out and ask for more.

What Are Resources?

Information and knowledge. Dollars. Time. Vision or hope. Support. Physical space. Electricity. Water. Food. Heat. Travel. Land. Laughter. Plants. Pens. Computers. Music. Passion. Memories. Wellness and rest. An extra pair of hands. Someone to watch the children. Someone who has done the same thing before and learned from it. Pots and pans. The feeling and sound of laughter. When you feel strong. The list never ends.

Then Think Beyond Money

Start with resourcing and end with resourcing. What will help you to build toward your work that isn't about money?

KEEP REMINDING EACH OTHER OF WHAT MONEY IS, OF WHAT AFFECTS THE ASKING FOR IT, SUPPORT EACH OTHER, AND THEN GO OUT AND ASK FOR MORE.

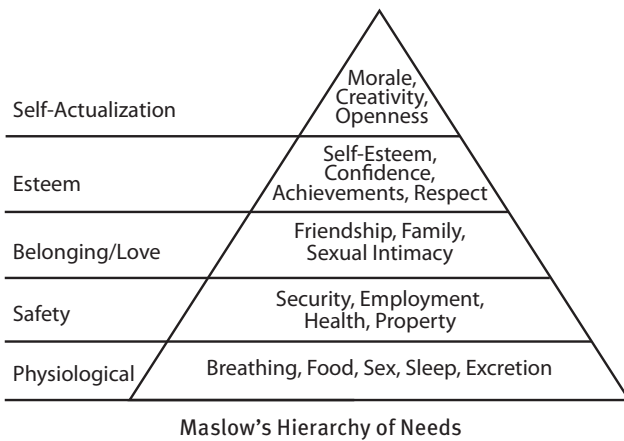
vidual and collective: our bodies want to expand our ability to resource. By putting attention to resourcing—to the good and lovely and nurturing—we expand our ability to feel those things. Just by paying attention. Regularly.

Talk directly about money. If you are involved with money—asking for money and needing money—then be as clear as possible about that money. Talk about it in the personal sense and in the political sense. Talk truthfully about the different experiences of money that are in the room. Practice seeing those different experiences as information, as resources you have to help you navigate the world of money.

Practice not setting up judgment scales based on who grew up with how much. Don't ignore class but instead, be deeply practical about it. Class differences exist in every community. They affect who is in what room and who is absent. They affect who had what kind of experience or support before they entered that room. Tell your stories. Learn from each other. Create a space where you can be angry or afraid or confused about anything related to money. And when you are angry or

Create a community map. Start a map that is going to be ongoing as a practice. Keep an open and growing list of individuals and organizations that are a part of your community as you define it. Notice which of those listed you are interdependent with. Notice other relationships. Look for opportunities, including issues or problems or stuck places that want to be resolved. Notice who isn't there and ask why.

Figure out what your needs are and make them as explicit as possible. We have been trained to do a budget and a fundraising plan at the start of every fiscal year. Create a part of your budget that breaks down your needs into relationship categories rather than cash-exchange items. So, instead of rent you might list “a place where we can keep our stuff and have meetings,” and instead of salaries you might list the many ongoing tasks that need to be completed. And within needs, think as broadly as possible: the need for friendship and belonging, the need for a place to keep your stuff, the need for food. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (see next page) is a useful tool for brainstorming needs. This is a kind of labor-and-material-goods audit that



breaks your work down into concrete pieces.

Figure out what you have and how that can build. Do the same kind of labor-and-material-goods audit with what you have and be as specific as possible. Don't worry if this step feels like it's not immediately about the work as it is currently defined. For example, one staff member might be an amazing gardener or be bilingual or a dancer. These are resources, gifts, that might also be useful in surprising ways.

Now, we put it all together to resource our work, from the center out.



The first place we resource is with ourselves, whether we are talking about our individual or our collective bodies. Ask how you can build on what you have in order to meet what you need, including your own individual and collective sustainability.

Next, we expand the circle to resource from our immediate community. Look at the community map you have created and match it against your needs. Ask how you can build from here. What relationships or connections can be deepened? What exchanges can be made? What barriers or problems can be

cleared so that you have more access to the resources provided through community? And what can you give? How can you provide goods or services to your community beyond what you are already doing?

When this is all done, look at the unmet needs. This is where money is going to come in, but in bringing money into the equation, continue to be as direct and transparent as possible.

Then repeat this whole practice again and again and again, continually coming back to resourcing, particularly when things feel hard or you feel stuck or overwhelmed. This is precisely the moment when resourcing can help us to shift and transform. Each time we do it, it gets a bit stronger and easier the next time. With attention, our ability to resource in ways that are good and sustainable will only grow—from the individual nervous system and out to communities.

Three Seconds and a Lifetime of Trusting

Each cell in our body only has three seconds of oxygen at any point. Part of our existence at the cellular level is trusting that the resource of oxygen will be there when we need it. Three seconds and a lifetime of trusting. That's what this work is about.

We know how to keep things the same, caught up with a cash economy that starts with the free resource of sunlight and turns it into a system and practice that is not free. We know that everything our communities have experienced and known affects how and if we can resource ourselves. We know how to survive because we are here today. It is deeply important to be grateful for every single thing we have learned and done in order to survive. Without it, we wouldn't be here and ready to change.

But surviving is not the same as liberation, as having access to all of the goodness that exists through connection, through the space to feel the sunlight on our skins, the time to notice our children.

Moving beyond survival is slow and deeply intentional work. Fundraising as we know it maintains the status quo, only redistributing some of the money to some of the places where it's been lacking. Resourcing is about transformation.

Three seconds of oxygen. Now, breathe again. ■

Susan Raffo lives in Minneapolis, MN with a body that carries the ancestry of both colonized and colonizer. She is a writer, bodyworker, community organizer and, as part of a job share, is one half of the Executive Director of the PFund Foundation. Thinking for this piece has to be shared with Sarah Abbott, Coya Hope Artichoker, Kate Eubank, Heather Hackman, Lex Horan, Thea Lee, David Nicholson, Cara Page, and Jessica Rosenberg to name a few.

Mapping Our Experiences

A Training Exercise

GIFT and FIERCE

IT'S EASY TO TEACH PEOPLE HOW TO RAISE MONEY. It's harder to get them to actually do it. What often holds us back from being effective fundraisers is not lack of skill but negative experiences with money or fundraising.

Here are some of the typical negative experiences that many of us have had:

- Unhealthy communication—as when there is fighting within families over money
- Unjust power dynamics—as happens when people feel coerced by those who have money that they need
- Diminished self-worth from the feeling of not having enough money
- Guilt over having more money than others
- A sense of scarcity from believing that one will never have enough money

When we don't dedicate time to exploring these experiences during our fundraising planning processes, usually one of two things occurs: People go along with the creation of the fundraising plan but because they haven't raised or perhaps even recognized their negative feelings, they don't implement it. Or, people raise these issues but in a way that is unproductive, such as perpetuating myths, resisting participation, or creating tension or hostility.

To help bring these experiences into your fundraising discussions in a productive way, use this fun and revealing exercise at the beginning of a training, meeting, or retreat. It combines writing, talking, moving, and sharing in small groups as well as in the big group so that participants can dig deeper and think more creatively about how they can feel supported to raise money.

We have found that doing this exercise helps ground people in what they already know and helps them link their past experiences with their current fundraising efforts.

Questions to Get You Started

THE TYPES OF QUESTIONS THAT WORK BEST are those that are open-ended (rather than answered with a simple yes or no) but can be answered in a few words or one sentence. For example, rather than asking “Do you like fundraising?” (answers will be too shallow) or “Share one positive fundraising experience” (answers will be too long), try, “What is one thing you like about fundraising?” It's a good idea to mix a couple of fun and easy ones with those that are more serious and provocative. Here are some of our favorites:

What sustains you in fundraising?

Where do you turn for fundraising inspiration?

What do you like most about raising money?

What's the largest amount of money you've asked for and received?

What comes to mind when you think of the word “money”?

What comes to mind when you think of the term “fundraising”?

What's the most challenging thing you've experienced while fundraising?

How has race (or gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, class) affected your fundraising efforts?

What's the worst response you ever got when asking someone for money?

What is one value you hold around the way you raise money?

What is a skill, talent, or resource you have that helps you in raising money?

What is one feeling you often experience in fundraising from institutions such as foundations, corporations, or government agencies?

What is one feeling you often experience in grassroots fundraising—asking for money from individuals within your community?

Exercise: Mapping Our Experiences

Goal: To help deepen our conversations around fundraising and increase our effectiveness in doing fundraising by recognizing the fuller breadth of our experiences.

Participants: Anyone who will be fundraising for the organization. This exercise is easiest facilitated for 8-20 participants.

Time needed: 30-60 minutes

Materials: Flip chart paper, enough markers for everyone there, tape.

Preparation: Decide who will facilitate the exercise. Choose four to seven questions from the list in the sidebar that are relevant to your group, or create your own questions. Write one question at the top of each flip chart sheet. Tape the sheets up around the room, leaving a few feet of space in between sheets.

Steps:

1. Everyone picks up a marker. Without talking, each participant walks around the room, writing answers to each of the questions on the posted sheets. The facilitator encourages participants to answer with their first reactions rather than think too long about what to write. People should spend no more than two minutes on each question. Provide two-minute and one-minute warnings.
2. Divide participants into as many groups as there are flip chart sheets or fewer (ideally, three to five people per group). Have each group stand in front of one of the flip charts and briefly discuss the answers there. After a few minutes, each group moves on to the next sheet, and so on. The total amount of time for this section should only be two to five minutes per question. Be sure to give time notifications to keep groups moving, as this section can take quite long otherwise. Don't worry if

there isn't enough time for every group to discuss all the questions. An alternative, if you are short on time, is to give the entire group five or ten minutes to walk around the room looking at all the charts individually without discussing their responses.

3. Bring the large group back together and ask these reflection questions:
 - Did you find any of the questions to be particularly challenging to answer?
 - Did you find any of the responses to be surprising?
 - Did you notice any similarities, differences, or themes among the responses?

Follow-up. Use this information to help inform your fundraising planning and training. For example, if several people shared during the exercise that talking about money triggers anxiety, you may want to spend time exploring the fear of asking (see the excellent *Grassroots Fundraising Journal* article, "Getting Over the Fear of Asking," by Kim Klein available at grassrootsfundraising.org).

You can then incorporate support mechanisms in your fundraising campaigns to address the anxiety, such as beginning fundraising discussions with breathing or relaxation exercises, pairing people up with fundraising buddies, or having each person post an inspiring quote on their wall when making fundraising calls. ■

FIERCE is a membership-based organization building the leadership and power of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) youth of color in New York City. GIFT and FIERCE co-facilitated this exercise at the Brecht Forum's 2011 annual grassroots fundraising conference.



CROWDFUNDING

The New Wave of Online Grassroots Fundraising

Emily Nepon

Mariposa Food Co-op supporters at their June 2011 ground breaking ceremony. Photo by Karen Kirchoff

OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS, you've probably seen lots of online fundraising campaigns spreading around social networks to raise money for creative projects, activist campaigns, or personal needs like medical expenses. These kinds of campaigns are often referred to as "crowdfunding." Like the highly visible fundraising for Obama's presidential campaign, crowdfunding works on the premise that lots of small gifts can add up to meet larger needs. Sound familiar?

Crowdfunding websites like Kickstarter, IndieGoGo, or ChipIn are online tools that make the process of grassroots fundraising accessible and fun for people who might be hesitant to participate in a call-a-thon or host a house party. Most crowdfunding sites don't require a group to have nonprofit 501(c)(3) status, providing fundraising opportunities to a wide range of projects and groups that aren't able to use traditional online fundraising sites such as JustGive or Network for Good.

The visibility of all these successful online fundraising tools helps to encourage lots of new fundraisers and donors to dream big and bring in the funds to make it happen. But not all crowdfunding campaigns are successful. A fabulous online fundraising page is just a tool—raising money still requires asking lots of people to give. Fundraisers need a large network (in this case, online) that can be mobilized to give and to spread the word and ask their networks to get involved. The general strategies of grassroots fundraising still apply: Planning, Asking, and Thanking are all crucial, and they take work! Here's how to make the most of the medium.

CHOOSING A PLATFORM

Each fundraising campaign is different, and you'll have to sort out which platform meets your specific project's needs.

The top sites share a consistent model, but they vary in terms of fees, features offered, and site traffic (see chart on page 15). For example, Kickstarter is popular because of its high site traffic, while ChipIn is great for small campaigns because it charges no fees. Give some thought to these questions:

- Is the ease of outreach worth losing up to 12% of your income to fees? Most of the sites take about 5% of the amount donated, plus you lose another 3-5% to PayPal or credit card fees. Is the ease of communicating your campaign worth the cut you'll lose? Could you raise the same money by doing personal outreach, or directing people to give through your website or send checks? If your goal is less than \$1,000, it is probably easier to raise the funds by asking directly instead—and keep that \$100 you would have lost to fees!
- Is your goal aspirational or easily within reach? Using Kickstarter, you don't get any of the money unless you reach your target amount by the deadline. That pressure can help to bring in donations, but is it worth the risk of losing all the pledges if you don't make it to the finish line? IndieGoGo charges a higher percent fee to those who don't meet their goal. In that case, once you've reached the halfway point, you'll lose less money if you invest the remaining amount (at the last minute) to meet the goal. Do you have seed funds you could put in to reach your goal?
- When do you need these funds? Sites differ in how long a campaign can continue. IndieGoGo allows up to 120 days for funding campaigns. Kickstarter campaigns can last up to 60 days, but they report most success for campaigns of 30 days or less. Be sure to look, too, for the fine print on when you'll get a check from the site—there is often a

week's hold before funds transfer into your account after the close of a campaign. If you need funds immediately, a PayPal "donate now" button or a site like ChipIn that only sends funds through PayPal may be a more direct fundraising solution.

TOP TIPS FOR CROWDFUNDING:

- **Plan, plan, plan!** Successful campaigns consistently spread the word and keep in touch with donors and supporters through updates on their giving page and regular email communication. IndieGoGo's blog reports that "On average, the campaigns on IndieGoGo that send 11 or more updates to their contributors raise 137% more money than projects that don't." Plan ahead about how you'll share your message and keep it current, and how you'll keep people coming back to your site. Filmmaker Jennifer Fox raised \$150,000 using Kickstarter—three times more than her goal! On indieWIRE's blog she explains:

Our team...discussed how the campaign would start—rather simply—and how we would keep rolling out new facets over time...This included building email lists, adding new incentives, and creating regular new videos for our website, Facebook, and Twitter that could be linked with our consistent updates on Kickstarter. We saw our campaign as having three initiatives: the web campaign, seeking out and approaching larger private donors to become Producers, and setting up Sneak Preview Benefit Screenings in key locations.

- **Choose a platform that will be easy to update.** Think ahead about a schedule of emails, postings, and updates on your giving page. Organize in advance for a packing party to send thank you notes and perks.
- **Be Strategic.** Set realistic goals and deadlines. Make a few different income plans—if you need to raise \$1,000, do you know 100 people who could each give \$10? Can you reach 500 people, with the knowledge that many will ignore the link? Be strategic about how many donors are needed to meet your goal and how long it will take to do that outreach. What contact lists do you have access to? How many people in your networks can you reach out to personally?
- **Videos make a difference.** Kickstarter's blog reports that of the first 1,000 projects successfully funded on their platform, campaigns with videos had a success rate of 54% compared to a 39% success rate for campaigns without video. Keep videos short (less than five minutes), simple, and personal. Make a clear ask early and again at the end

of the video. Make it playful and inviting—keep the fun in crowdfunding! Video quality does matter; considering your budget and the skills in your volunteer network, determine whether it makes sense to pay a professional videographer or solicit in-kind video support. One great example of a crowdfunding campaign is How Philly Moves (kickstarter.com/projects/jtiziou/how-philly-moves), which raised more than the \$25,000 goal from a 2.25 minute video with simple editing. The video features short clips of the people involved, and perks include greeting cards made with compelling photos of the project. Another great video helped the Heels on Wheels Roadshow (kickstarter.com/projects/962427077/heels-on-wheels-roadshow-2011-gas-fund) raise more than their \$950 goal. That video was shot in 45 minutes with a glittery background, fun outfits, and goofy props. The Heels on Wheels Roadshow raised money and increased turnout by spreading the word about their tour through wide social networks.

- **Tell a personal story.** As in any grassroots fundraising, we know that most people give to people. "Who" is as important as "what" in this model. Successful campaigns introduce the people raising money and benefiting from the campaign, and tell their stories. Be specific about where the money will go, and be creative about how to show it in a video. Often we're asking people to invest in a vision—so make it easy to imagine the outcome, and be clear that all the pieces are there and you just need the money.
- **Offer rewards.** Mobilize your community to donate items and services to use as "perks," such as T-shirts, VIP passes to events, or downloadable copies of any media you're producing. Remember that all of the people you ask (personally) for in-kind donations can be on your outreach team because they're already invested in your success. Think of items that relate to your campaign, and get creative—but keep it simple! Perks can help get people excited about the campaign, but you want people to donate because of the project you're promoting, not because you're offering them something in return. Be careful that you're not losing money on perks—consider the cost of materials, mailing, and labor.
- **Offer incentives.** Consider promotions and matching gift pledges. Spread the word that the next 10 donors will receive a certain perk or that donations over the next three days are matched by an anonymous donor. A challenge match can also be a compelling ask for a major donor to support your campaign.

Personal outreach makes it happen. Send your own personal emails to friends, family, and email lists. Post to social networks,

Want to read more articles on fundraising with a focus on community resiliency and resourcing? Please visit the *Journal* archive at grassrootsfundraising.org/archive to find articles like:



"We Are Stronger Together: Active Solidarity & Collaborative Fundraising in the South" (v30 n4)

"Keynote Speeches from Ai-Jen Poo and Cara Page from Money for Our Movements 2010: A Social Justice Fundraising Conference" (v29 n 6)

"Giving Within Communities: Center for Participatory Change's Research on Horizontal Giving" (v29 n1)

"Caring For Each Other: Philanthropy in Communities of Color" (v20 n5)

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websites, and blogs. Cast a wide outreach net while also making strategic, explicit asks in the same ways that you would with any other fundraising campaign. Covering a talk by Kickstarter co-founder Yancey Strickler, PDNPulse.com reports that "strangers generally only begin donating after a project has at least 70 percent of its fundraising and a goal seems within reach." It also shares that "A review of Kickstarter traffic has shown that emails that are personalized drive the most traffic. Facebook is the second most effective way to send traffic to a project," and it quotes Strickler as saying, "Twitter is useless for fundraising."

Thank before you bank—still true! As the gifts roll in, send personal thank you emails to donors letting them know they'll also get a real thank you (and any selected perks) when the campaign ends. Encourage donors to share with their networks, and don't forget to send them updates as the campaign moves along and reaches that deadline!

Crowdfunding campaigns are a great tool to engage and energize supporters, bring in new donors, and spread the word about your important work! ■

Emily Nepon is a writer, blossoming accordion rockstar, and grassroots fundraising consultant in Philadelphia.

CASE STUDY: Food Co-op Exceeds Goal with Crowdsourced Fundraising

WEST PHILADELPHIA'S MARIPOSA FOOD CO-OP IS MOVING from its tiny storefront home of 30 years to a building with five times as much space. Not a 501(c)(3), the co-op's total capital campaign goal is in the millions, with much of the funding coming from public and private financing and hundreds of member loans and investments. To generate media attention and spread the need through wider networks, Mariposa created an IndieGoGo campaign with a goal of raising \$10,000 from non-members—including members' friends and families across the country. Here's what made this campaign a success:

- Co-op members fulfilled work-shift hours by volunteering their skills and labor to film and edit a high-quality video. The filmmakers researched similar campaigns to see what was most effective and wrote a script to make sure the video would stay short and tell a clear story.
- Expansion committee members, board members, staff, and other long-time members participated in telling the story in the film—including a star appearance by the young (and extremely cute) child of one staff member.
- Mariposa spread the word about the fundraising campaign through their website, member email list, Facebook, "Friends of Mariposa" email list, and the personal networks of expansion committee members and board members.
- Members received work-shift hours for designing and creating items for perks, including pins, water bottles, and reusable shopping bags.
- Mariposa's fundraising consultant successfully solicited a popular local music booking organization, R5 Productions, to match gifts up to a total of \$5,000. The day that R5 Productions sent a personal email to their list, the Mariposa campaign skyrocketed by 92 gifts totaling \$2,700. In the next few days, another \$3,800 came in from 62 more gifts.

In the end, Mariposa raised \$8,000 from 192 new donors. In addition, Mariposa received the full \$5,000 challenge gift. The campaign received great media attention, including front page listing on IndieGoGo and mention on their Twitter feed, which helped to spread the word and bring in new members and more donations as well as provide press for R5 Productions.

TOP CROWDFUNDING SITES

Although there are many crowdfunding websites available, we chose our top five through weighing a combination of factors, including: site traffic, name recognition, fee structure, and accessibility to non-501(c)(3) fundraising.

SITE	PROCESSING FEE (% of donation)	ADDITIONAL PAYPAL/ CREDIT CARD FEES (% of donation)	INCOME STREAM OPTIONS	DAILY UNIQUE VISITS*	BEST KNOWN FOR	FEATURES OFFERED	NOTES
chipin.com	0%	3-5%	PayPal, credit/debit	6K	Low-tech fundraising widget for no added fee	Somewhat customizable campaign page. Image embedding. Widget to share campaign.	Few bells and whistles, no technical support, and outdated website. However, it also takes no direct fee, so campaigns only lose PayPal processing fees.
firstgiving.com	5%	2.5%	credit/debit	15K	Large group fundraising campaigns and events with individual and team pages, such as AIDS Ride for Life	Customizable campaign pages for nonprofits, fundraising teams, and individuals. Video and Image embedding. Share updates. Donor comments. Widget to share campaign. Tax-deductible donations only. Support through email, online chat, phone, or twitter.	Works like online donation processing sites Network For Good or JustGive. Only available for 501(c)(3)s.
gofundme.com	5%	3-5%	PayPal, credit/debit	4K	Personal fundraising campaigns such as celebrations and events, health care costs, etc	Customizable campaign page. Video and Image embedding. Share updates. Offer perks. Donor comments. Widget to share campaign. Tax-deductible donations only. Support via email. Wish list section where donors can choose to give to a specific item (such as airfare for a honeymoon).	
indiegogo.com	4-9%	3-5%	PayPal, credit/debit, check	8K	Project categories include creative, cause, & entrepreneurial. Calls itself "World's leading international funding platform."	Customizable campaign page. Video and image embedding. Offer perks. Share updates. Donor comments. Widget to share campaign. Options for receiving tax-deductible donations. Partnership with arts orgs, including fiscal sponsors; all partners have curated sections of their connected projects. Customer support via email.	4% fee if goal is met goes up to 9% if goal not met.
kickstarter.com	5%	3-5%	Amazon	30K	Funding creative arts & technology projects	Customizable campaign page. Video and image embedding. Offer perks. Share updates. Donor comments. Widget to share campaign. High-visibility front page featuring campaigns. "Curated Pages" offer projects related to creative groups, including schools, museums, festivals, etc. Customer support via email.	Top site for name recognition and traffic. If you don't meet goal, all donations are returned. All projects must apply to Kickstarter for approval.

*Averages based on Google reports of estimated site traffic for the past 18 months.

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