Alternative Fundraising

A Guide with New Ideas for Securing Funds to Support Your Work

Introduction

Funding for women's organizations, particularly those working at the local level, has become increasingly difficult to secure in Kosovo.

Therefore, based on requests from our member organizations, the Kosova Women's Network (KWN) has compiled this booklet with new fundraising ideas for women's organizations.

With international aid to Kosovo likely declining with time, it is important for KWN members to involve more diverse supporters.

This booklet, created based on conversations with members in 2012, has a few ideas for getting started.

Host a Gala Event

A Gala Event is a festive and fancy occasion, similar to a wedding or other celebration. You can host such an event, inviting people to dress up for dinner and dancing.

Invite well-known artists and/or musicians to perform during the event. See if they will agree to donate their time or reduce their prices since the funds raised will go towards a good cause on which your organization is working. Explain to them the importance of this cause so that they want to donate their time. Similarly, convince the venue and caterers to provide discounted or free of charge services. You can later offer free advertising and promote these artists and businesses in your public relations materials, stating that they supported you and your cause.

Once you have everything arranged, create a list of people that might be interested in attending. You can sell individual tickets or entire tables to individuals, families, businesses, and

politicians. Tickets grant them entrance to the event, dinner, and entertainment.

In addition to advertising the event in media and through personal invitations, meet in person with businesses or individuals that have money and may be more likely to purchase tickets or tables.

Explain to them that the event will be fun and at the same time provide funding for your organization's important work. You can say that they supported the event through your public relations materials later on, providing businesses with free advertising. The tickets should be sold at an amount that will ensure a profit for the organization, after paying the musicians, venue, and caterers.

If you invite special guests, you can have someone take pictures of participants and special guests, selling these photos in a simple frame as a souvenir.

Gala events can enable you to fundraise, increase the visibility of your organization, and do something fun all at the same time.

HINT

Remember to send thank you letters to all your sponsors! Provide information about your event and how successful it was! This will make them want to support you again.

Sell Women's Handmade Products

Some of you have members who produce handmade products, traditional clothes, and food. Why not collaborate with your members to market and sell these handmade products?

Some profit can go back to your members for producing the products, while the rest can be used to support the services that your NGO provides to your members (e.g., marketing, collection, distribution, and sales).

You can promote these products on the internet, for example by creating a Facebook page to showcase your products and to show how purchasing products supports both women and a good cause.

You can also make agreements with different shops around Kosovo or even outside Kosovo where you can sell these products.

For example, some non-profits in Europe and the U.S. sell products made by women around the world and send the profit back to women; you can forge relationships with these organizations towards selling handmade products to larger markets outside Kosovo.

Again, a small portion of the sales can support the functioning of your organization.

If your members cook delicious traditional or other types of food, you can similarly arrange to sell these products in various restaurants or shops.

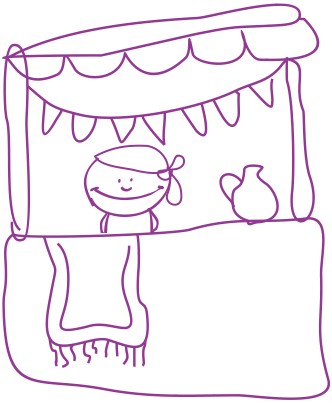
Organize a Fair

Organizing a fair can offer artisans, including members of your organization, an opportunity to showcase their products.

Fairs enable artisans to identify new customers and market their products. Fairs can be held in town squares or city centres where people easily see and buy things.

Remember to get permits and permission from municipal authorities and police, as needed.

During the fair, you can sell homemade food, cakes, and handmade goods. A small portion of every sale can support the organization's work in organizing the fair and your future work.



Organizing these fairs also contributes to preserving cultural heritage in Kosovo.

March, Walk, or Run

Involve your members, youth from schools, and/or community members in running or marching for your cause. They can go door to door and/or to their family members explaining how they are walking, marching, or running for a good cause. Then they can collect pledges from community and family members. For example, for every kilometre they walk or run, that person will give them a Euro or 10 Euros. They keep a list of all the people who will fulfil pledges for this cause if they achieve their goals.

Then the funds go to the organization after the person achieves their goal. This has been a very effective way of raising funds for cancer research. Cancer survivors, their friends, relatives, and other community supporters all collect pledges for how far they can walk against cancer. Then the funds raised are donated for cancer research.

Media coverage and thank you letters make people feel part of such events and encourage them to support these events every year. Further, the march or run itself, covered by media, raises public awareness about this issue.

Secure Support from Local Businesses

While fundraising, you can think of involving local businesses as sponsors. They will be able to support you by offering products or services that you need for specific activities or your ongoing activities for free or with discount prices.

Once you have a plan for developing a particular activity, you should start your research for possible businesses that would consider sponsoring you. Talk to employees, partners, friends, and family to find out what connections they have in the local community. Perhaps they can introduce you to people who might sponsor your event.

Media can be great sponsors and partners in helping you to spread information about your fundraising event. This can save you time and resources in advertising your event. Put a brief description of your planned event and its aims on a paper with your organization's logo.

Make sure you have this document with you when you visit potential sponsors. This will make you look more serious and official.

Explain to each business representative that you meet the purpose of your activity and the achievements that you seek through the event.

Marketing is important for most businesses, so you can make a list of the benefits companies will receive as a result of sponsoring your event, such as exposure to potential customers and media through event attendance, promotions of the business by your organization, event signs, advertising, sampling businesses products, etc.

These can be benefits to the business in return for donating their product for your good cause.

Organize an Auction

Invite many potentially interested people and members of the community to this event.

Goods can either be donated by diverse businesses (giving them free advertising), or you can ask people attending the event to bring items that they are willing to donate for auction. Then you can host a written auction where people write the price they are willing to pay for each item on a piece of paper, bidding higher and higher until the bidding is closed and the winner pays for and receives the item. Alternatively you can hold an oral auction where a famous or energetic and interesting MC auctions off the goods to the highest bidder. The funds collected can then go to support your organization.

HINT

Remember to advertise your fundraising event! Flyers can be simple yet catchy black and white pieces of paper created by your NGO members.

Coffee Slam

Macchiatos, mochas, cappuccinos and Turkish coffee… Coffee houses across Kosovo are the place to hang out. This fundraiser works great and is appropriate for all ages.

For a smaller group, see if someone has an espresso machine that you can borrow for the evening. They will probably be very happy to act as your barista (the person who makes coffee) for the evening or you could do it yourself. You will want to have coffee, sugar, chocolate syrup, and several varieties of tea.

If it is a large group, you may want to find a business that will rent all of the equipment and supplies. They may be willing to give your group a discount in exchange for the free advertising at your event. They will probably provide a barista too. Fundraising will come from drink sales. You should have juice if you are expecting children.

To keep the crowd entertained, have various activities planned, including poetry reading, music, performances, and/or discussions on hot topics.

Cook Up a Storm!

Use your excellent cooking skills to raise funds.

There are several ways. You could host a course that covers the basics of cooking, how to cook particular ethnic foods, or ideas for unique holiday meals.

Perhaps your cooking course could focus on one type of food, such as vegetarian dishes, party appetizers, or Indian food.

Alternatively, the course could focus on one method of cooking, like baking.

For working women, a cooking course could convey skills in how to make nutritious, affordable meals for their families in 30 minutes or less.

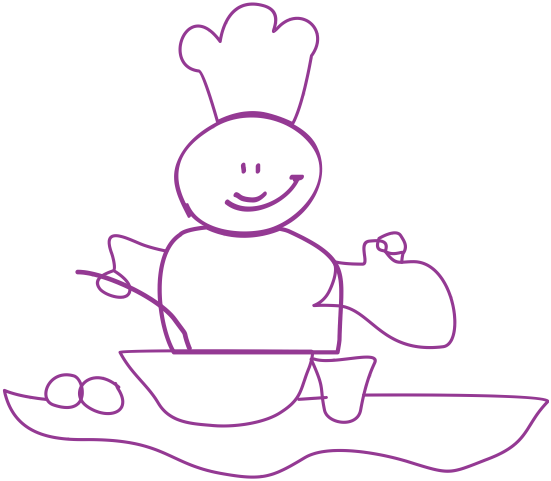
When organizing your cooking course, limit the number of students based on the amount of space you have available.

Charge a small fee to participate, which will cover the costs of materials as well as some small profit to support the work of your organization.

For a lower fee, you also could also allow observers who may not be able to cook, but can take notes on recipes.

Afterward, everyone can sample the goodies prepared during class. By varying the topic and cooking method, you'll never run out of possibilities for future classes. You could hold these courses in your organization's office and/or your own kitchen to save on costs.

Meanwhile material also could be provided as a donation from a company.



Face Painting

Children love to have their face panted. This is a popular activity at carnivals and fairs.

Set up a face painting booth at your next craft show or fair. Enlist the help of some talented artists to help paint faces.

Have a practice session before hand so that everyone knows what they are doing. You will want to have seats, water for cleaning brushes, wet wipes, face paints and examples of face painting that the kids can choose from.

You could charge as little as a Euro for simple art work or up to five Euros or more for elaborate ones. As your young customers walk around they will drive more customers to you.

Offer instant photos of the face painting for a dollar more, so they have a lasting memory.

This will be a fun fundraiser for everyone. It could also be part of your fair or other fundraising events that you organize.

Photography, Painting or Poetry Contest

This is a chance for aspiring artists to show their pictures and young poets to show their writing capacities. Have a photo contest and/or a short poetry contest and ask for submissions. Host an art show where you can setup the pictures and poetry in frames or simple matting. Include a small biography of the artist/poet.

In order to raise money, make it a juried art show. Place a jar, can, or box in front of each picture and poetry in which people can place coins or bills to vote for their favourites. For example, one Euro can equal one vote. Offer juices and sweets to your patrons, which could be free or could be sold to raise further funds.

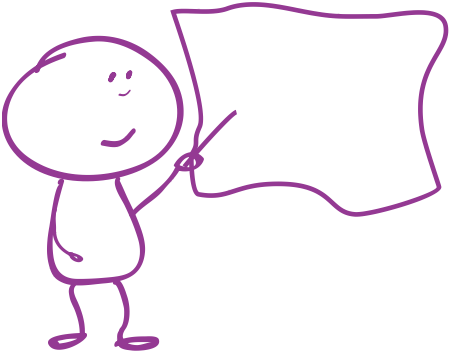
Consider setting it up in a public space, such as a local shopping centre or main street to increase your traffic and votes. Leave the display set up for a week or long weekend.

As an alternative or at the end of this week, you can auction off the photos and poetry to the highest bidder.

Guest Speaker Seminars

Every community has famous people who stand out. Maybe they are journalists in local news, famous singers, artists, actors, activists, athletes, politicians, or successful local business owners. Consider setting up guest speaker fundraisers. Ask well known members of the community to donate some time (like an hour) to talk to groups about their professions, how they overcame adversity in their lives, what it took to get where they are, and any other inspiring topic.

Then sell tickets to people in the community to come and hear them speak. To encourage participation and increase excitement about the



event, sell a set number of tickets, and let everyone know seating is limited.

You can also sell concessions, but for an event of this nature, it's probably better to charge a little more for tickets, and offer complimentary snacks and beverages.

HINT

Remember that local newspaper, TV and radio stations often look for opportunities to engage with the community in a live setting, so presence at your event may be just what they are looking for in exchange for free advertisements! You're doing them a favour!

Don't limit your speakers to high profile members of the community. Ask a fire fighter to talk about what their job is like, and the sacrifices the job requires. Invite a single parent who works and runs a successful household to give tips to other parents.

Everyone has stories and information to share, no matter who they are or what they do. The possibilities are endless.

Holiday Flower Sales

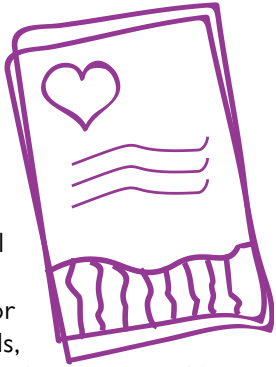
Spring tulips, lilies, and roses are all seasonal flowers that could be a great fundraiser for your group. Find a local nursery that will wholesale flowers to your group so that you take advantage of lower prices. This fundraiser works best if you pre-order these. This is a fundraiser that can be run multiple times a year to take advantage of the seasons.

You will need to work out with the nursery if they will deliver the flowers to you or if you will need to pick them up. If in winter, make sure you pick them up in a heated vehicle so that the cold does not shock the plants.

Advertise your sale with flyers sent home with students and in your local newspapers.

Have a pickup day and time for everyone to get their flowers. Send each plant home with a thank you note and a care sheet explaining how to take care of the plant.

Holiday and Special Event Cards



Even though electronic methods have replaced a lot of day-to-day communications, many people still like to send paper cards for holidays or special events.

Cards can be for everyone: family, friends, co-workers and neighbours. They may even give cards to their service providers such as doctors or dentists.

Your organization can find a company that sells holiday cards or you can involve your members in making creative handmade cards.

You can sell your cards door to door, through friends and family members, at fairs, or through local shops.

Movie Night

Dim the lights: it's show time!

Raise money, have fun, and provide an evening of entertainment for your community by showing a movie. It will take some planning, and some time for advertising, but it can be a fun and exciting way to raise money for your group. Find out if your local cinema (if one exists in your city) will let you use their hall, or check with local schools to see if any of them have an appropriate facility.

Choose a new, popular movie to get as many people involved as possible. Someone can assist by selling tickets. Post fliers around your community, and advertise on Facebook.

The objective is to show a good movie and raise money for a good cause. If it is a success, you can make it a regular weekly or monthly event.

Bravo!

Book Sale and Reading Hour

Ask each member of your organization or everyone you know to bring an old book for sale.

Arrange a "Book Sale Day" in front of a local school, institution or in a public space where many people pass by.

During this event you can advertise another event to follow: A Reading Hour.

During this reading hour, everyone can participate, exchanging views on a particular book or different books. A well-known writer could be invited as a guest of the evening.

People could pay a small fee to participate in this event, while it could be held in a school or public place that would provide the space for free. If you want, you could serve the participants drinks, tea, and sweets, which will not cost you much or you could even ask someone to provide them as a donation.

Organize a Party

KWN started initially without any donor funds, and operated without donor funding for three years. How did we do it?

In addition to small contributions into the basket during KWN meetings, we organized parties!

Pick out your favourite songs to play and bring music equipment. Better yet, convince local artists and bands to come play for free to support your cause. Find a space you can use for free. Then charge people a small amount to enter the party (e.g., 2-5 Euros).

You can also sell drinks to raise additional funds. If you explain the importance of your efforts, perhaps businesses will even give you the drinks at wholesale cost so you can make a small profit on them.

What do you think?

Was this booklet useful?

Have you tried any of these fundraising tricks, and how did they turn out for you?

Do you have ideas or experiences that you'd like to share with other KWN members?

Please write to us at info@womensenetwork.org or call us at 038 245 850 to tell us about it!

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