



“It shows that people care”

LGBTI organisations fundraising from individuals in Europe and Central Asia



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Authored by Bruno Selun for ILGA-Europe and the Global Philanthropy Project

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1. Foreword 2 min. read

In recent years, many LGBTI activists have reached the same conclusion: strengthening the movement requires strong communities, and strong organisations with diverse income streams. We've collectively started asking ourselves: How can we build stronger local communities? How can we cultivate financial sustainability? Fundraising from individuals is part of the answer.

Raising money from individuals may be difficult, and cultures of individual philanthropy vary greatly between countries – not to mention the absence of any such culture, which can make fundraising especially demanding (but also innovative). This report shows that LGBTI activists in Europe and Central Asia already fundraise in wildly different contexts, partly learning from the feminist movement's innovative women's funds, started in the 1970s.

In 2013, several foundations and partners came together to develop individual donor fundraising in the European LGBTI movement. They initiated coaching, training, peer support and development opportunities.

We want to thank the Open Society Foundations, the Arcus Foundation, other funding partners who supported these early initiatives; as well as Charlie Rounds, Ise Bosch, and other individuals who provided valuable support and counsel. The Lafayette Practice and ILGA-Europe also helped kick off these early efforts.

The European LGBTI movement is at its best when we share experiences and resources across groups and across countries. That's exactly what this guide does: it shows our communities already fundraise in dynamic and innovative ways. We hope it inspires!

Evelyne Paradis
Executive Director
ILGA-Europe

Matthew Hart
Director
Global Philanthropy Project

2. Why fundraise from individuals?

5 min. read

Why fundraise from individuals? If your answer is “money”, think again: above all, fundraising is about building a strong community of supporters who will stand with you and your organisation in tough times.

When done right, fundraising creates conversations with your donors; increases trust in your organisation; widens support in your community; and creates a strong group of lifelong loyal supporters who will become your best advocates, changing hearts and minds in the long term.

Even better: the steps needed to prepare for fundraising will always benefit your organisation. Mapping your network of contacts, mapping your resources, developing your elevator pitch: this will always strengthen your organisation, even if you don't raise any money. It will also make you a better, more strategic advocate.



Fundraising is also a great constructive response to negative developments, like a new anti-LGBTI law or a surge in violence against a community. It channels energy, attention and resources. At the end of the day, it creates opportunities.

Anna Shepherd, ILGA-Europe

After a while, raising money from individuals may also create a new income stream for your organisation. This will help reduce dependence on other sources of funding, and increase your organisation's stability and sustainability.

Who is this guide for?

This guide is for activists and leaders in organisations defending the rights of LGBTI – lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans* and intersex – people in Europe and Central Asia.

Are you pondering whether or how to start raising funds from individuals, or trying to improve your fundraising? Read on!

This guide is also for grant-makers supporting LGBTI organisations, curious LGBTI activists, and activists in other social justice movements who will find advice, inspiration and useful resources.

What's in this guide?

This guide is the first exploration of fundraising with individual donors by LGBTI organisations in Europe and Central Asia. It offers a fresh, regional understanding of how fundraising fits into our communities.

Methodology

This guide offers a very brief overview of the topic. It uses data from an original survey of 62 LGBTI organisation leaders, interviews with 13 fundraisers in LGBTI organisations, and interviews with 11 grant-makers and fundraising advisers. The survey took place in August and September 2017, and interviews in September and October.

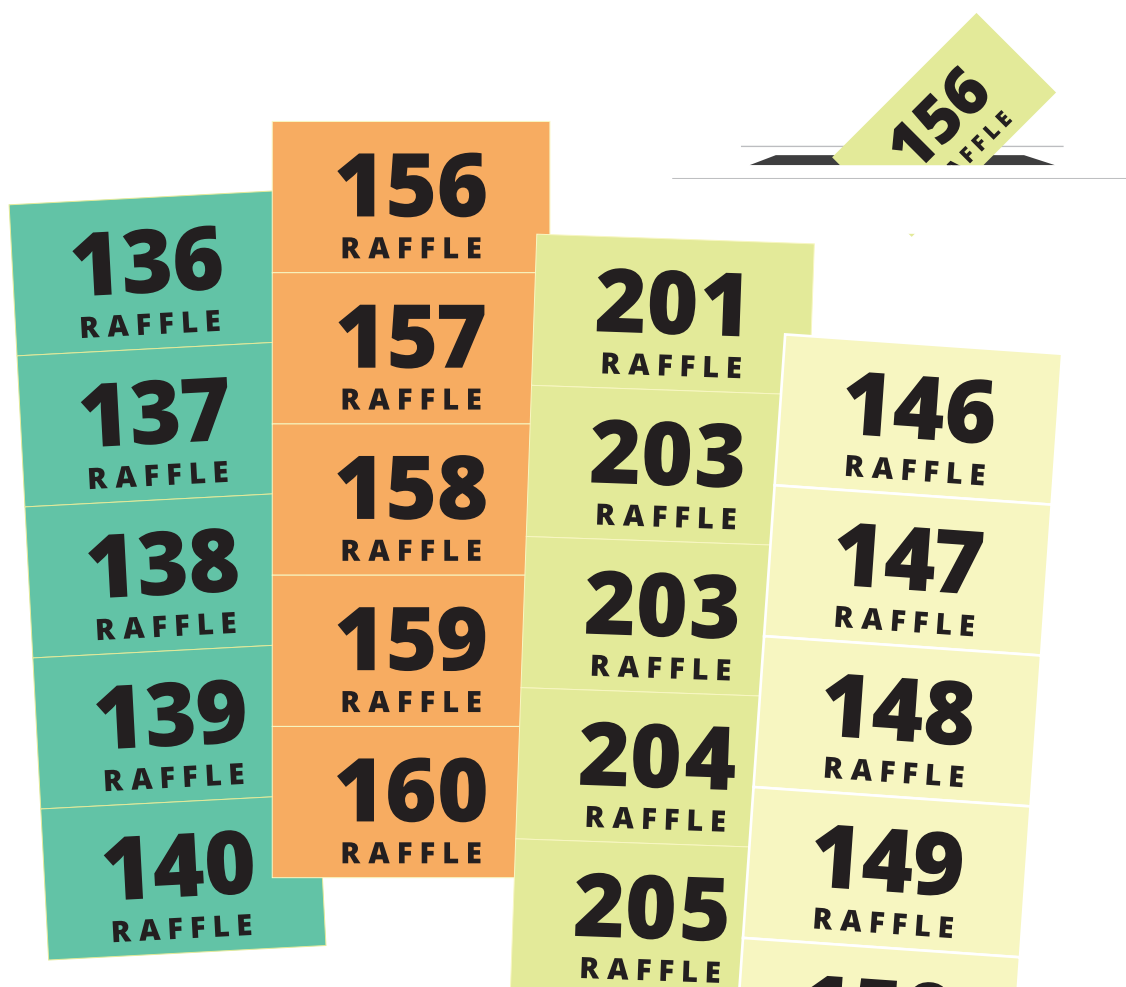
3. Frequently Asked Questions: Starting and improving your fundraising, (p. 5) provides pointers and suggestions if you're about to start fundraising from individuals, or seek to improve your existing practice.

4. The lay of the land: LGBTI fundraising in Europe and Central Asia today (p. 15) explores what fundraising looks like today, as well as common successes and challenges.

5. Case studies (p. 21) offers inspiration and ideas through ten varied examples of LGBTI organisations already raising funds, in wildly different contexts.

Finally, **6. Resources** (p. 71) provides a list of useful resources to help you start or improve your fundraising.

If you're an activist, we hope to inspire you to start or strengthen your fundraising efforts. If you're a grant-maker, we hope to help you see the strategic importance of this discipline for the next decades – and how crucial it is to support its emergence.



3. Frequently Asked Questions: Starting and improving your fundraising 25 min. read

What is individual donor fundraising?

Fundraising from individual donors is simply asking individuals for money to support your organisation, a specific project or a cause. It has a long history in Anglo-Saxon countries (the United States, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand...), but NGOs across the globe, including LGBTI organisations, are increasingly doing it.

“Individual donor fundraising” or “fundraising”?

This guide refers to fundraising from individual donors as “fundraising” for short, although there are many more fundraising disciplines. (For example, fundraising from foundations, national governments, international institutions...).

What is it *really* about?

Fundraising is really about mobilising your community: building and strengthening genuine individual relationships with your supporters.

It's also about trust. People will only donate if they trust your organisation, or if someone *they* trust (a friend, a family member...) trusts your organisation. A lot needs to happen before and after you ask for money to build and maintain that trust.

Trust takes a long time to build, but also brings much more than money. It generates individuals who believe in your cause in your local area, in your country or abroad; who are ready to defend you and your cause when talking with others, or in a vote; and who are likely to give again if you maintain that relationship.

What does fundraising involve?

Asking for money and receiving it is the visible part of the iceberg. But much more needs to happen:

- Asking for money
- Receiving money

BEFORE:

- Making a plan/strategy
- Linking fundraising to advocacy priorities
- Listing potential donors
- Building trust and convincing donors
- Asking and being told 'no'

AFTER:

- Thanking donors
- Publicising your results
- Updating your donor list or database
- Staying in touch with donors

What are the advantages and drawbacks?

When done right, fundraising has many advantages... but also a few drawbacks:

ADVANTAGES

- Preparing for fundraising (mapping your network, your resources, and developing your elevator pitch) will **strengthen your organisation** regardless of whether you raise money
- It **builds a community** of supporters and allies who will support you with their trust, money and votes
- It **strengthens your community** and increases its own resources and power
- It **generates small to moderate amounts of money** that you can use independently from rigid funding applications and projects
- It strengthens your organisation by **connecting different parts of your work**: communication, advocacy, community-building...
- It can **improve your organisation's reputation** in the eyes of the public and policy-makers

DRAWBACKS

- You may have to spend **significant resources** (time, money and/or energy) before you see your first coin or bank transfer
- Generating revenue will take **time** – very often more time than you think
- It requires **commitment in time, money and/or energy** to continue fundraising in the long run
- When done with little thought or care, it may harm your organisation's reputation

Should my organisation start raising money from individuals?

You should definitely consider the option!¹ We suggest asking yourself what your motivation is, where your organisation stands, and whether you're ready to ask.

First, **what's your motivation?** Do you want to get quick access to lots of money? In that case, you'll be disappointed: money is never easy nor fast to get this way. We suggest looking at other options.

Or are you interested in a long-term effort to build your community and increase support from your allies? You will generate some revenue on the way, but it won't be a significant part of your budget – in the first years at least –, and that's not a problem for you. In this case, you should explore fundraising.




This would be my advice to small community-based organisations without prior experience in individual fundraising: if relationship-building, community engagement and building champions and allies are as important to you as financial returns, fundraising is a good way to go. But don't go into it expecting money quickly. It's unlikely, and you risk being frustrated.

Lydia Guterman, Arabella Advisors

1. If you are an LGBTI organisation, head to *"It shows that people care": The insider's briefing* for essential preparatory steps to help you answer this question.

Second, **where does your organisation stand?** Are you the only person motivated to do this? Is your organisation struggling with too few resources? Or are you registered in a country where the law or financial regulations make it hard to receive money from individuals?² If you answered 'Yes' to any of these, you should address these aspects first. Your fundraising will be stronger for it.

On the contrary, if your organisation's board, staff and volunteers are keen, if you have at least some resources to get started (this may be just a little staff time, or a few energetic and committed volunteers, or a little money) and inspiration to help you start,³ then you should try it.



Third, **are you ready to ask for money?** Are your board, staff and volunteers comfortable talking to friends and supporters about their work and its value? If this isn't something you usually do, you may want to start by developing your elevator pitch,⁴ and testing it with friends or existing supporters. If you can talk to friends and community members about your work, its value

and the fact that it requires financial support, it's a good sign you can start fundraising.

-
2. Some organisations are based in countries where the law makes it harder to fundraise from individuals, and yet receive individual donations. For examples and inspiration, see case studies tagged with #international and #solidarity.
 3. See **Resources** to find inspiring fundraising ideas.
 4. See **Resources** for ways to develop your pitch.

SEIZE THAT OPPORTUNITY!

Regardless of these three questions: is there an opportunity right in front of you? If yes, the scale should tip towards trying. Whether it's an artist offering to donate their proceeds, a law about to be voted, or a company or another NGO offering to help you, seizing a special opportunity will almost always mean more momentum, more energy, and more willingness to donate. This could be a good time for you to launch into individual fundraising. Read the rest of this guide and our recommended resources to help you decide.




How much does it cost?

It can go from minimal costs to a full-fledged new system with staff and dedicated activities. Your costs may vary, but fundraising will always cost *something*.

The main costs when raising money from individuals can include:

- **Time** Fundraising will always take time: from your staff, board, volunteers, and ideally all three. You'll need time to plan your strategy; identify opportunities; plan your 'ask'; ask; receive and manage donations; follow up on donations; keep track of donors and donations; and communicate about your work and its impact.
- **Staff** If you have staff, it's worth exploring whether they can use part of their time in activities linked to fundraising, for example keeping your donation tracking system updated. (Any fundraising work requires specific skills;



check that your staff has them already.) If you are a larger organisation, it may be worth hiring a part-time or full-time development officer. If you don't have staff, more time will be required of your board or volunteers.

- **Communication** In addition to telling the story of your organisation's impact, you'll have to let people know that your impactful work requires resources to succeed, and that your organisation accepts donations vital to its success. This could be simply modifying your website or posting on social media, but it could also include overhauling your website, designing and printing leaflets, or buying adverts online or in local media.
- **Initial investments** Almost all fundraising efforts will require an initial investment. Take events: to organise an auction or gala, upfront costs will include room rental, a sound system, catering and drinks. If you do this for the first time, don't rely on ticket sales or evening benefits to cover 100% of these costs, or you could be left with significant debt.⁵
- **Administration** You will need to keep track of donors and donations. This isn't optional: what if someone is interested to donate but never hears back from you (bad), or donates and doesn't get thanked (worse), or donates and sees their personal details made public due to your poor administration (extremely, extremely bad)? Creating your own spreadsheet is a good start; more complex ways include using customer relationship management (CRM) systems, ranging from the free and open source to the very expensive.

5. For events, see the book *Fundraising for social change* by Kim Klein in **Resources**.

I already know all this. How can we improve our existing fundraising?

If you've already fundraised, great. Could you improve the following areas?

- **Do you have a fundraising strategy?** Are you working towards clear goals, such as X% of your annual budget coming from donations within three years? Is someone in your organisation responsible for this strategy, ensuring it connects to your entire work such as campaigning, messaging, advocacy or membership-building?
- **Have you developed a fundraising calendar?** A good calendar connects fundraising to all your other activities, including all relevant events. Think Pride, end-of-year fundraising appeals, calls to thank your best donors, etc.
- **Does your fundraising directly serve your organisation's priorities?** For example, in addition to collecting money for a project, event or cause, are you using fundraising to build a base of political supporters for your next advocacy campaign?
- **Are you raising funds from individuals continuously?** Although your organisation might focus on it once or a few times in the year, do your friends and supporters also donate throughout the year, whether from a donation button on your website or having pledged monthly donations?
- **Do you have segmented target donor groups with different messages for each?** It's important to know who is likely to give, and why. You may need to use different



messages for parents of LGBTI children than for elderly LGBTI people, for example. Equally important is donor development: are you turning first-time donors into repeat donors, and repeat donors into monthly donors?

- **Do you stay in touch with previous donors?** Do you tell your donors the story of what they helped achieve? One thank-you isn't enough: are you maintaining your relationship through updates and occasional invitations to your events?
- **Are you learning?** Failure is a normal part of any fundraising efforts, but it can help you improve and learn. Are you objectively monitoring the various times you fail, why you fail, and identifying patterns and root causes to improve next time?



What will success look like?

Immediate success can take many forms, but after several months successful fundraising will likely feature:

1. A good response from your target audience.

A fair share of the people in your target groups give money, and provide encouraging feedback on your fundraising and/or what it supports.

2. Creating relationships with your community.

Your organisation retains donors: you thank them appropriately after each donation; they give again (by themselves or when you ask them); you communicate regularly (for example at the end of the year, to show them what you did with their help), or when the time is right (for example to inform them of a major campaign

victory, or as your next fundraising round comes up). But your relationship isn't only about money: donors trust you and support your campaigns. In short, your donors are like family to your organisation.

3. The share of fundraising money in your budget increases.

After a few years, you earn more money through fundraising, and it has its own place in your budgeted income. This means you can respond to urgent developments more flexibly, without having to rely only on grants from governments or foundations.

An example

One mid-sized organisation we spoke to went from no fundraising in 2016 to raising €2,500 from individual donors in 2017. Although at first the president was uncomfortable about asking for money, she now affirms that fundraising “isn't just about money, but also about building your constituency's agency, involving them in your work, and generating pride in supporting us.” The staff and board support this approach. Fundraising efforts also led to creating an annual calendar of campaigns and better social media presence – benefitting the whole organisation.

The organisation now sees the full transformative potential of fundraising, and plans to use it in future.

Donate



4. The lay of the land: Individual fundraising in Europe and Central Asia today 15 min. read

We're in a time of exploration, and a culture of giving is developing. Several LGBTI organisations in Europe and Central Asia started asking individuals for money, and their supporters increasingly accept that activists need resources to defend human rights.

Although not much money flows from individuals to LGBTI organisations yet,⁶ there's growing willingness to try cultivating more individual giving.

Where it happens

When it comes to fundraising and donating, cultural habits vary widely and are currently changing.

Traditionally, Anglo-Saxon countries have offered the strongest explicit and public culture of individual giving, including entire industries dedicated to fundraising. But individual giving is also very strong in France (where 49% of taxpayers are donors,⁷ not far from the UK's 55%, although it's less talked about in France), and extremely popular in the Netherlands (85%), Poland or Switzerland (both 70%).

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6. In 2018, ILGA-Europe plans to publish a report exploring how LGBTI organisations are funded in Europe.
 7. Comparative data on individual donations in Europe is scarce. Statistics in this paragraph come from the 2015 report *An overview of philanthropy in Europe*, by L'Observatoire de la Fondation de France and CERPhi (available from <http://bit.ly/2zcog8S>).

Brief research for this guide found LGBTI organisations fundraising from individuals in 28 countries.⁸



Laws and tax rules also vary widely, and can make asking and donating much easier... or harder. Various schemes and incentives encourage British taxpayers to donate (payroll giving or Gift Aid, for example). Strong tax incentives make giving easier on donors' wallets in France (where every

euro donated decreases tax by 66 cents), the Netherlands (where donations are 100% deductible within a percentage of donors' income tax) or Switzerland. Since the early 2000s, many countries in Eastern Europe also allow taxpayers to assign between 1 and 2% of their taxes to a charity of their choice. (Though telling tax authorities about one's support for LGBTI organisations presents challenges.)

In short, the picture is broad and nuanced. This guide shows that fundraising is not only possible, but that it already happens in many places.

Who does it

In terms of **resources**, organisations that fundraise are generally stable and long established. Their resources include staff, an office, and at least some IT resources and infrastructure.

-
8. We're aware of LGBTI organisations fundraising or having fundraised from individuals in Armenia, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

In terms of **skills**, they're good community organisers: they know how to run Prides, occasional or regular campaigns, and public meetings. They manage their finances and resources well, are good communicators, and often establish and maintain their leadership – either in a specific niche (for example on trans* issues) or nationwide.

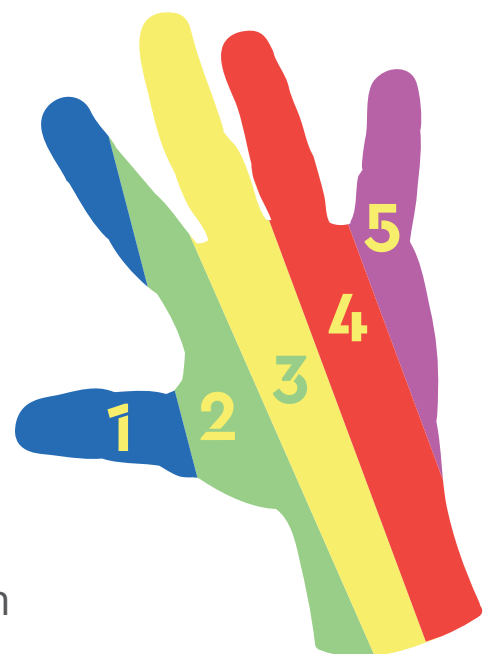
And in terms of **knowledge**, they understand funding well, including the fact that funders come and go; understand themselves well, including their strengths and weaknesses; and understand their ecosystem of activism, including how to work with other organisations.

In short, they function well as a whole and in many domains, not just fundraising.

5 frequent features of success

What do successful fundraising organisations have in common?

1. They demonstrate leadership and commitment. One or several members of the board and/or staff drive the implementation of the fundraising strategy, activities and learning. Others can also make the case for small donations, and use various opportunities to generate support. The organisation's culture evolves to embrace fundraising as part of their regular engagement with communities they serve.



2. They treat fundraising as a system, not a task. They've linked their activities, structures and communication to fundraising. They know it's not a one-off project, and provide mindful efforts and adaptation over time.

3. They know their audience and ecosystem. Leaders in the organisation have a good grasp of their constituency. They know who is in their network of supporters, know how to attract them, and can “make friends” with them while staying on course with their colleagues, board and membership.

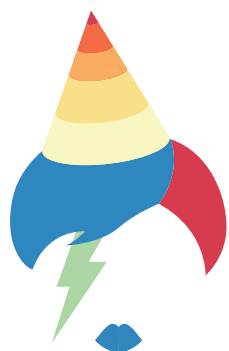
4. Donors relate to them, and they relate to donors. They understand what motivates someone to donate. Writing grant applications is about facts, rights and demands. Speaking to donors is about emotion, empathy and relationships. Successful organisations speak donors’ language and nurture genuine relationships with them.

5. They excel. LGBTI organisations can sometimes be perceived as overly ideological and unreasonable. Against a backdrop of low expectations, organisations fundraising with success are pragmatic and professional, which helps positively surprise their audience.



If you have a strength that can surprise people – excellent campaigns, innovative projects, top-grade communication... this will sway them to donate. Excellency pays off.

Ise Bosch, Dreilinden



5 frequent challenges to overcome

The fundraisers and grant-makers we interviewed recognise several frequent challenges when fundraising from individuals in Europe and Central Asia:

1. **Adapting to local culture.** Asking strangers for money is sometimes at odds with cultural habits, and activists can find it hard to do. This may be changing with younger generations of activists, or with shifting cultural habits.

2. **Fear of associating.** Both sides of the fundraising relationship can fear being associated with the other. LGBTI organisations fear individuals linked to shady corporations could give “dirty money”, or give with questionable intentions. On the other side, potential donors may see it as too political – or downright taboo – to fund LGBTI organisations, especially in countries with less acceptance or strict laws.



3. **Legal and regulatory challenges.** Raising funds requires abiding by laws and financial regulations, from the mildly complex to those designed precisely to discourage fundraising. Where extreme laws make it impossible to fundraise, activists may collect funds via an organisation or foundation established abroad. Banking fees may increase the cost of receiving money, especially if no alternative solutions – PayPal, online banks, tax or employee matching schemes – exist.

4. **Social challenges.** Raising funds is hard; raising funds for gender and sexual minorities may be even harder. It's probably harder to find donors in places with strong anti-LGBTI stigma or discrimination, where it may be (or

appear) dangerous or illegal. In some places, most people may simply not have money to give.

- 5. Operational challenges.** Raising funds from individuals requires fool-proof systems to record and process donations; monitor donor profiles and habits; and communicate with donors at the right time and in the right way. Mistakes can lead to situations that are embarrassing or downright dangerous (for example if someone is outed as a result of their donation becoming public), or to legal consequences. Setting up and maintaining these systems requires dedicated resources and skilled staff.

No culture of philanthropy? Are you *sure*?

Think of religious institutions. Everywhere in the world, local religious leaders:

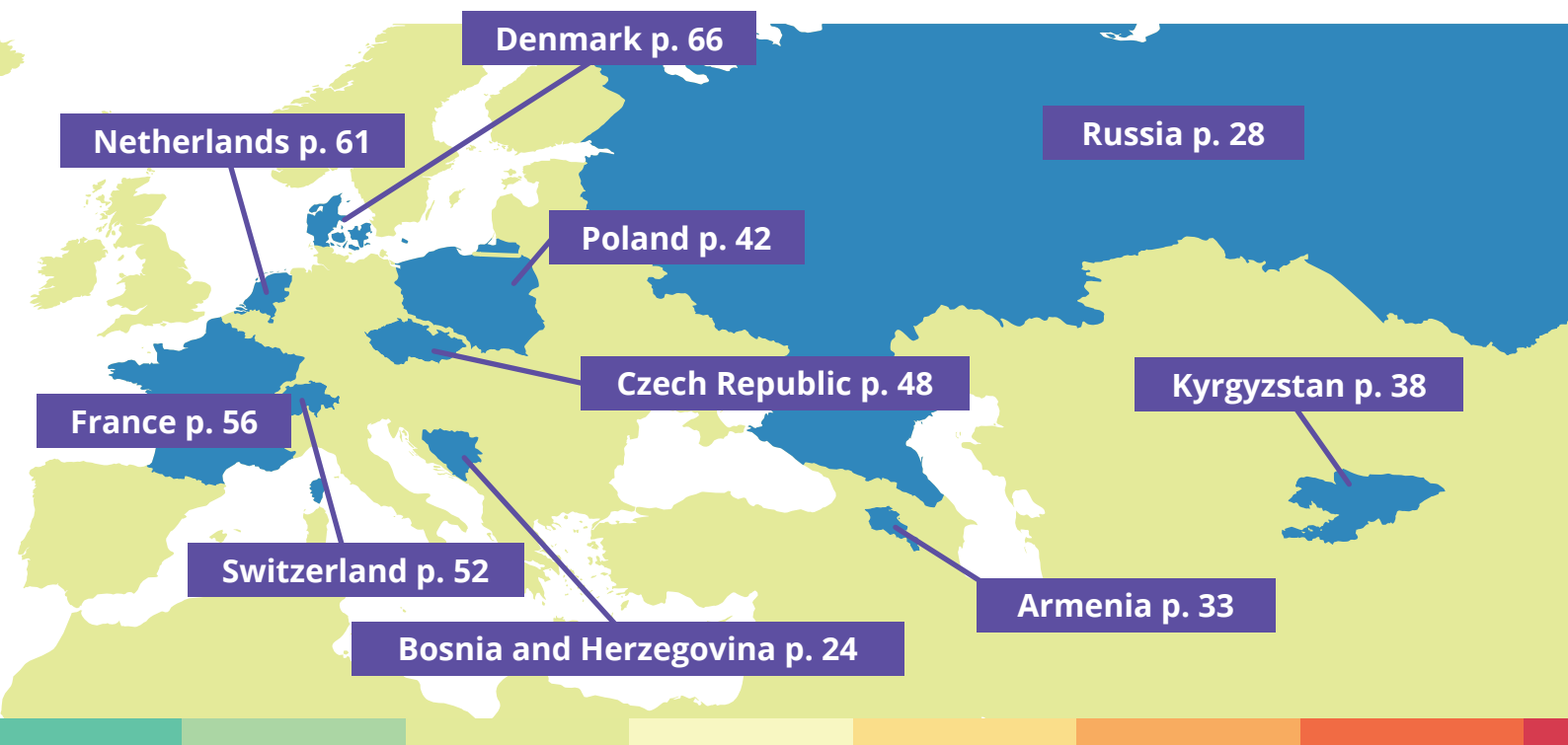
1. Tell their audience they need more resources.
2. Tell their audience about their vision and mission, and illustrate them with stories.
3. Ask their audience to support them financially, making it easy for them: with a basket going around the church, or by asking them to donate a small amount every month for example.

Do you still think there's no culture of philanthropy where you live?





5. Case studies 5 min. per case study

LGBTI organisations already fundraise in greatly different contexts:



Context

Each case study will show you:

 Context for LGBTI people	Context for individual donations 
<p>Overall friendliness to LGBTI people.</p> <p>Red light: Unfriendly overall</p> <p>Orange light: Nuanced</p> <p>Green light: Friendly overall</p>	<p>Overall friendliness to individual donations, including legal and financial regulations, and the culture of giving to NGOs.</p> <p>Red light: No or very limited giving culture</p> <p>Orange light: Evolving giving culture</p> <p>Green light: Established giving culture</p>

Different types of fundraising

There are countless ways to fundraise, and these are just some of them. Look for these tags to get inspired:

Fundraising methods

#events Organising an event specifically to fundraise: a dinner, gala, auction, contest, theatre play...

#online Raising money online, for example with a “Donate” button or page

#facetoface Asking people for money directly, for example at Pride or at other events not directly focused on fundraising

#merchandise Selling goods, for example calendars, bags, T-shirts...

#services Selling services, for example charging speaking fees

#international Fundraising from people living abroad

Objective

#general Fundraising for your organisation’s general activities

#project Fundraising for a specific project, like a shelter or a campaign

#solidarity Fundraising for another group or project than yours

#crisisresponse Fundraising in response to a crisis



Infrastructure size

#small Fundraising involves little administration, and may be done with a simple Excel spreadsheet to track donors and donations. Good to start, but may become inadequate.

#midsize Fundraising involves some administration, and may be done with a mailing list hosted on a professional service, segmented donor groups, and a clear list of past donations for each donor. This is necessary to fundraise efficiently over time.

#large Fundraising involves a fair amount of administration, and may be done with specific software (a customer relationship management, or CRM, software; a mailing list manager; free options exist for all these). Each donor has a clear profile showing past donations and interactions, allowing personalised interactions and donor development (encouraging them to give more based on their history and profile). This is the best approach, but requires time and skill to use.

Protect your donors' data

Use e-mail lists with **extreme** care: it's very easy to mistype, or use the wrong field ("Cc:" instead of "Bcc:") to reveal your entire list of donors. This can lead to serious embarrassment or worse: outing someone, or a breach of privacy that may be punished by law. We recommend using free, professional mailing list services instead (for example Mailchimp or TinyLetter). Simply search for "free mailing list service" and compare them.



There are no "best" methods: each has strengths and weaknesses. What matters is finding the right one(s) for your organisation, your context and your community.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Starting small

SARAJEVO OPEN CENTRE

#online #merchandise #international #general #small



The Sarajevo Open Centre's Programme Manager, Maja, and Executive Director Emina warn their fundraising efforts are small. That may be true, but they're also creative and varied: they fundraised from individuals four times in four years, using a different approach each time.

Context for LGBTI people

- **Rights** LGBTI rights are achieved at 31%
- **Ranking** 25th out of 49 countries rated in the ILGA-Europe Rainbow Index 2017

Context for individual donations

Legal and financial regulations No restrictions, but **no incentives** either for individual donations to NGOs.

Culture of giving It's doable, but **unusual** for people to donate to human rights NGOs.

World Giving Index 44% of people report donating to a charity in the month prior to being asked. The country ranks 30th out of 139 worldwide.

Their motivation

Why did they start raising funds from individuals? "We wanted to make it *mean* something for people to attend our parties and festivals. We wanted to tie it to support for their

own community. This way people would better appreciate the events, feel good about buying branded materials, and their presence would support our work.

Their story

First, they **raised funds to help a trans member of their community pay for gender reassignment surgery.**

Together with other organisations, they collected money from guests at their parties, and organised auctions for people to sell personal items: someone would auction their own arts and crafts (such as chairs, photos, a dress made of condoms...), and the money would go into the surgery fund. Parties and auctions funded a large portion of the surgery.



Selling merchandise at the film festival in 2016

Second, the last two editions of their Queer Film Festival featured **a table to buy T-shirts, bags, magnets and keychains** with the festival logo. They gave smaller items away, such as stickers. The money went to two smaller organisations: one regional human rights organisation (to screen festival movies

outside of the capital), and one LGBT community sports organisation (to organise more activities). These smaller NGOs were behind the table themselves, and raised up to 300 marks (€150).

Third, they designed and printed **a diary for 2017** with the name of their organisation. They gave the calendar away for free in December 2016, including this message: "If you want to support us, you can transfer money to our account:". Sadly, they don't know how much money they made (see **Their challenges** below).

Fourth, they set up **an online donation button** on their website, explaining donations were important, and inviting visitors to transfer money to their account.

Finally, they **received money from abroad**. A Bosnian expat who married his partner in the United States knew the Centre was looking for support, and asked wedding guests for donations on their behalf – collecting 2,000 marks (€1,000). The Centre since encouraged others to do the same: **“We posted an article about his donation on our website**, hoping it will inspire other members of our diaspora. We’re crossing fingers it’ll work!”

Their challenges

They ran into two challenges. First, with technology: “We wanted to use PayPal’s online donation button instead of giving our bank account number. But PayPal doesn’t allow individual donations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, so we had to provide our account number the classic way. We fear it’s a barrier, as people have to physically go to their bank or use their banking app to donate.”

And second, with their own administration: “We didn’t think about tracking donations received from the calendar message. So when we started getting money on our account, we couldn’t know whether it was from our website donation call, or our calendar. We would do that differently next time.”

Their assessment

They don’t see fundraising as a major activity... for now: “At the moment, we only have about 20 different donors. But it’s already something! One person gave money, and then came to our events for the first time. But we’re just at the beginning, and we want to become more strategic when raising funds from individuals.”

Their resources

After doing everything on their own, they decided to take an online course from the United States (the **GlobalGiving Accelerator**) to improve their skills and strategy: “We’re expecting a lot from that course. We want to learn how to approach people, how to build a community, how to keep them informed of our work, and much more. A lot of our fellow citizens live abroad, and ultimately we want to create a network of expats donating regularly.”

Their advice

“We’d give the same advice we give ourselves: start at the beginning, don’t hesitate to explore, and see where it takes you. We think our initial ideas can turn into something more strategic.”

On the web: [Their donation page](#) / [Their website](#)



HotLine achievements over the last 7 years

*Supporting the HotLine you help many people to feel more
secure with their lives*

24/7

online chatroom functions
24 hours a day

2508

request we've received
through online chat room
since it's launch

19 350

calls we received
through the HelpLine
555-73-74 (800) 8

6645

people received
help in 2016

Russia: Responding to crises with crowdfunding

THE RUSSIAN LGBT NETWORK

#online #international #project #crisisresponse #midsize




The team at the Russian LGBT Network was carefully planning their crowdfunding campaign for a community helpline, when a life-threatening crisis erupted in the Chechen Republic. The Russian LGBT Network shows how planning early helped them move fast and raise funds, even in a crisis they hadn't foreseen.



Context for LGBTI people

- **Rights** LGBTI rights are achieved at 6%
- **Ranking** 48th out of 49 countries rated in the ILGA-Europe Rainbow Index 2017



Context for individual donations

Legal and financial regulations There are **no restrictions** for donations to NGOs. However, Russian law makes operating LGBTI NGOs *extremely* complicated and risky, and few people want to be associated with them.

Culture of giving It's **doable and usual** for people – especially younger generations – to donate to human rights NGOs. However, people are only likely to donate to causes related to children, animals, the sick or elderly.

World Giving Index 17% of people report donating to a charity in the month prior to being asked. The country ranks 104th out of 139 worldwide.

Their motivation

Why did they start raising funds from individuals? Staff at the Russian LGBT Network explain their logic: “First, we wanted to start crowdfunding because it’s people helping other people, and this alone is empowering. And second, to respond to international interest during the Chechnya crisis.”

Their story

2017 has been a very busy year. The team had spent months planning a **crowdfunding campaign for The Hotline**: a phone number and chat room available 24/7 nationwide to offer psychological support to any LGBTQIA+ person, their parents, or allies.

They interviewed volunteers, trainers and callers to ask what the helpline meant to them. They produced texts for the seven-month campaign explaining how the helpline works, its story, who picks up the phone and how they're trained, who it helps... They agreed on key messages to post on social media, such as "This number of trans* people experience discrimination daily".

They were still planning when reports came in that gay and bisexual men were being kidnapped, tortured and killed in the Chechen Republic. This set off a chain of international reactions, and led to "an immense flow of people, NGOs, and media wanting to understand and help us in this crisis."

"We were already working with web developers for the helpline campaign, and told them: 'We have to create a new landing page for this new campaign – right now!'" That landing page and donation button have been essential to guide people wanting to help.

The crisis took the Russian LGBT Network by surprise, but thankfully they could respond quickly and set up the Chechnya fundraising campaign. To deal with the high volume of donations and reassure donors (present and future), they went for transparency: "We published a financial statement to tell our donors and the general public how much we collected, how we spent the money, and who our main donors were (with their agreement of course)."

"This was so well received: donors saw where their money went, and how they made a difference."

As for the long-planned helpline campaign, it reached its objective of 200,000 rubles (€2,900) in just two months. It continued until its scheduled end, in November 2017.

Their challenges

At first, they weren't sure if people would be interested. "We'd never worked with individual donors before. We didn't know whether they would be willing to donate for an 'undesirable' cause, for 'undesirable' people in Russian society. But we realised that there are potential donors out there, and they actually want this information so they can help!"

Maintaining momentum is a key concern, and requires different approaches when fundraising for crises than when fundraising for long-term projects. "For the helpline, our objective is that more people donate in small batches but regularly, say 100 rubles (€1.50) every month. Donors must understand the helpline's continued existence relies on regular donations." On the other hand, the Network must also continue receiving donations to respond to the ongoing crisis in Chechnya, "still far from being over. And even when it is, we'll need an emergency endowment to respond to the next crisis of this type."



NGOs need to move away from getting one-time donations to having people donate consistently and regularly. Our projects need this to become sustainable.

Team member, Russian LGBT Network

Their assessment

The team is realising the high potential of crowdfunding. “Our colleague in charge sometimes randomly announces amounts we’ve received so far. This shows how much people care, how much they believe in us. It’s very empowering. It’s changed us, a little.”

Their resources

While planning their helpline campaign, the team read several reports on how crowdfunding campaigns work, best practices, pitfalls to avoid, and maximising donations.

Their advice

“To people in Russia and the post-Soviet space: do it! People hesitate because it’s not perceived as socially acceptable. But there are people out there who really want to help you. We learned that people are more interested in us than we thought. Go ahead, you can make mistakes (no-one is error-proof). It’s better to make mistakes and learn from them than not do anything at all.”



This is part of the future of our activism.

Team member, Russian LGBT Network

On the web: [Donation page for The Hotline](#) / [Donation page for LGBT people in the Chechen Republic and the North Caucasus](#) / [General donation page](#)

Armenia: Harnessing the power of the diaspora

PINK Armenia

#events #online #international #general #crisisresponse
#small



Mamikon, Executive Director, explains PINK Armenia's efforts to build a culture of giving, particularly among the global Armenian diaspora.

Context for LGBTI people

- **Rights** LGBTI rights are achieved at 7%
- **Ranking** 47th out of 49 countries rated in the ILGA-Europe Rainbow Index 2017

Context for individual donations

Legal and financial regulations There are **no restrictions** for donations to NGOs, but **no incentives** either.

Culture of giving It's **doable** but **very unusual** for people to donate to human rights NGOs – although some NGOs slowly try raising funds from individuals.

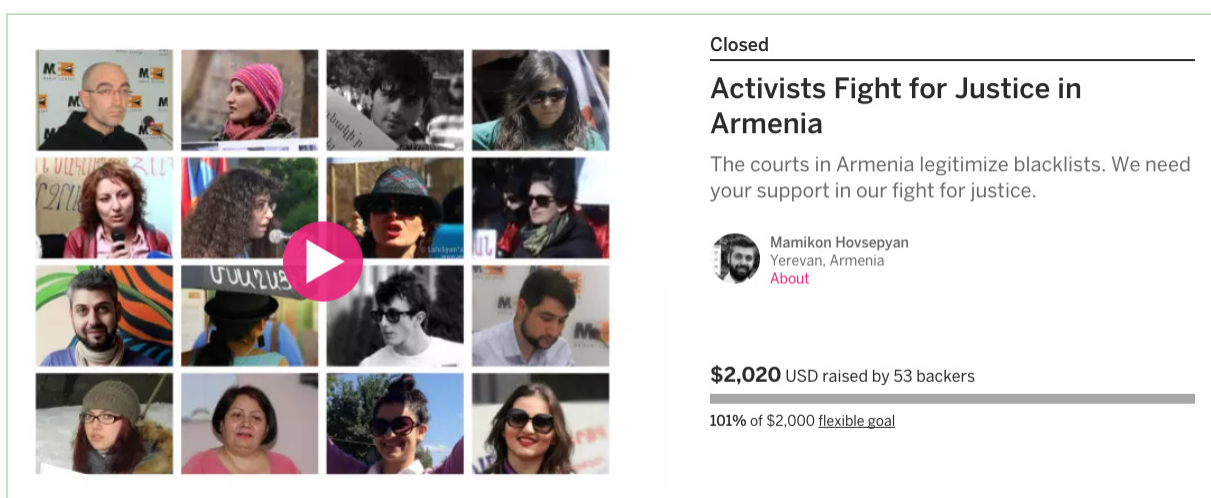
World Giving Index 12% of people report donating to a charity in the month prior to being asked. The country ranks 117th out of 139 worldwide.

Their motivation

Why did PINK Armenia start individual fundraising? It was as much about community-building as it was about money: “It started when we had to defend a case in court. We had some money to pay for it, but we also understood that if people supported the case financially, they would learn about the issue, support us, and we could show people standing with us.”

Their story

When an activist sued a national newspaper for publishing the names of LGBTI activists in a slandering article, the national LGBTI organisation PINK Armenia stepped forward to support the complainant. They **crowdfunded to meet legal fees**: over two weeks, they crowdfunded 840,000 drams (€1,500) online from supporters – both in Armenia and fellow Armenians living abroad.



The screenshot shows a crowdfunding page with a grid of 16 small images of people, a central play button icon, and text on the right. The text includes the title 'Activists Fight for Justice in Armenia', a description 'The courts in Armenia legitimize blacklists. We need your support in our fight for justice.', the name 'Mamikon Hovsepyan' from Yerevan, Armenia, and a progress bar showing '\$2,020 USD raised by 53 backers' which is '101% of \$2,000 flexible goal'.

PINK Armenia's crowdfunding page

But when the next case came up, it was harder to raise funds: “We had to collect \$800 for that new case, and it didn’t take off. We tried to collect funds through voluntary donations at a party, but there was no interest. Luckily, a fellow Armenian living in New York offered to help. He secured \$600 within hours by calling his friends. We collected the remaining \$200 during the party.”

These two experiences showed the value of addressing the Armenian diaspora: “We realised people abroad could be keen to help back home. Another time, another Armenian living abroad asked how they could help. We worked together, and they organised a fundraising party just for us; this was a great success.”

In addition to their diaspora, PINK Armenia also receive support from locals. “We organise parties with an optional entrance fee of 1,000 drams (€2). Sometimes people pay more (once, someone donated a \$100 note), or ask us how they can help.”

“So we tell them about our work, and ask if they want to support a specific project: we have a shelter project (which only runs on donations), we do research, advocacy, and public awareness-raising. Whatever we receive, we add that money to the project donors choose – if they choose one.”

How do they communicate with donors? “To keep them interested, we send a short annual report two weeks before it’s published online. At year’s end, we also send personal thank-you notes.”

They have a small fundraising infrastructure. “We use an Excel spreadsheet, and our financial manager also uses accounting software to keep track of donations and stay in touch with donors.”

Their challenges

When raising money for the first court case, people would remark negatively that the complainant was still seen drinking or eating out. “We had to explain that the money wasn’t for this person, but for our entire community. We raised the funds in the end, but we could still hear people say ‘That guy goes to restaurants and cafés but can’t pay for his legal fees!’ That was challenging.”

Mamikon also found motivating donors was hard: “Even if they want to support us, they’re afraid of being connected to the LGBTI movement, of being identified rightly or wrongly as LGBTI. We have to reassure people a lot about privacy.”

Their assessment

They run one crowdfunding campaign or host one fundraising event per year. In addition, a handful of people regularly offer to donate. All in all, donations represent 1–2% of their annual budget.



Now we’re not shy anymore about telling the public we need money. We’re not shy about saying ‘This amount of money was contributed by people like you, and we need this to stay active’.

Mamikon, PINK Armenia

Their resources

They found a training course on fundraising organised by ILGA-Europe very helpful. “We understood then that we had been communicating with donors the wrong way. We learned to use different approaches, keep track of donors, and engage and encourage them.”

Their advice

“Turn to your diaspora! Those who left still want to improve the situation back home. LGBTI people who fled discrimination maybe even more than others.”

“It’s also key to recognise and thank donors. This year, our 10th anniversary fundraising reception will feature a wall of fame thanking donors by name – or anonymously, if they prefer – for their contribution.”

On the web: **Fundraising page “Activists Fight for Justice in Armenia” / Thanksgiving cocktail and comedy fundraiser invitation / Their website**



Kyrgyzstan: Fundraising dinners to build a community centre

KYRGYZ INDIGO

#events #online #merchandise #services #project #small



Other approaches didn't work, so the team at Kyrgyz Indigo started fundraising dinners to collect money for a future community centre. They had to adapt to local specificities and obstacles, but managed to collect a notable amount of money over four years.

Context for LGBTI people

This country wasn't rated in the ILGA-Europe Rainbow Index 2017.

Context for individual donations

Legal and financial regulations There are **no restrictions** for donations to NGOs, but **no incentives** either. The law on operating NGOs is the most liberal in Central Asia.

Culture of giving It's **doable**, but **very unusual** for people to donate to human rights NGOs.

World Giving Index 29% of people report donating to a charity in the month prior to being asked. The country ranks 59th out of 139 worldwide.

Their motivation

Why did Kyrgyz Indigo start individual fundraising? Amir, Community Empowerment Officer, explains: “We want to set up a rainbow house to host an LGBTI shelter, community centre, and our office. We already rent an office, but we want to buy a building to increase our independence.”

Their story

Kyrgyz Indigo tried different approaches before focusing on what works best for them. “First, we tried **online crowdfunding** through Indiegogo. We ran two campaigns, first collecting a useful 68,000 soms (€850), but only collecting a fraction of this in the second campaign, well below our objective.”

They also turned to **selling small items and merchandise** such a locally-made jewellery, or Kyrgyz souvenirs painted in rainbow. This didn’t find a lot of takers, although it did raise 5,000 soms (€60).

The approach that worked best has been running **fundraising dinners**. “We’ve hosted three to four charity dinners per year. They’re made possible by many volunteers who help with the venue, the food, live music, decoration... They’ve taken place in different places, from the high-end Hyatt Regency hotel to simpler places. Patrons give 3,500 soms (€45) for the food, drinks, live music, raffle and more. 25 to 30 people attend each dinner.”

“We’ve done eight dinners so far. Roughly 1 in 3 attendees are returning guests, and 2 in 3 are new.”

Pitching at one of Kyrgyz Indigo’s dinners



“We try to make it unique and interesting so people come back. We asked a famous chef to cook the first dinner to establish a good reputation and attract people.”

They also organise raffles during those dinners: “Thanks to partners, we always have a few gifts to put up for a raffle: vouchers for stays at a high-end hotel, a spa retreat, romantic dinners...”

“And finally, an artist also paints portraits live during the dinner, and gives the paintings against donations.”

In total, Kyrgyz Indigo gathered approximately 2,450,000 soms (€30,300) since they started fundraising for their community centre in 2014.

Their challenges

Above all, Kyrgyz Indigo learned individual donations “aren’t part of Kyrgyz culture. We tried asking locals to donate, but people weren’t receptive at all. This may have to do with the giving culture as well as homophobia.” Because of that, fundraising from individuals hasn’t yet led to the results they had hoped for.

They also found that any fundraising method has drawbacks. “Online crowdfunding services imposed a fee, which we thought was too much. As for the charity dinners, it takes a lot of time and commitment to organise a single event.”

Another issue with the dinners is that so far, they only attract diplomats or workers from the international community. This means they’re not contributing to changing Kyrgyz hearts and minds, and that they’re not building a community of supporters among long-term Bishkek residents.



We'd like to find a way to fundraise from our local community. But it seems charity dinners won't be the right way. We have to keep searching.

Amir, Kyrgyz Indigo

Their assessment

"It's been hard to reach this point. We want to continue fundraising until we reach the amount to buy a building for the centre. But organising dinners is very demanding, and we're exploring other options – raising money from abroad, for example."

Their resources

Kyrgyz Indigo benefited from individual coaching to improve their individual fundraising. This was made possible by one of their funders. "It helped us write our fundraising strategy, and it made our fundraising more structured and coherent."

Their advice

"Don't fear failure: you should go ahead and try different approaches. Although it took a lot of time and energy, trying out crowdfunding, charity dinners and merchandise sale helped us reach different people every time."

"And definitely write your fundraising strategy! It helps to stay focused, assess the risks, and involve people who are ready to help."

On the web: [Their donation page](#)



Among many activities, KPH hosted a tattoo support day. People got tattooed, and artists donated their benefits to the organisation.

Poland: Cultivating small, regular and major donors

KPH – KAMPANIA PRZECIWIW HOMOFOBII

#online #facetoface #general #project #large




Chaber, Executive Director, didn't mind that KPH was among the first human rights NGO to ask supporters for money in Poland. Four years later, they manage an impressive database of small, regular and major donors. They account for 20% of KPH's annual budget.



Context for LGBTI people

- **Rights** LGBTI rights are achieved at 18%
- **Ranking** 37th out of 49 countries rated in the ILGA-Europe Rainbow Index 2017



Context for individual donations

Legal and financial regulations There are **no restrictions** for donations to NGOs, and **some incentives**. (Tax breaks, but very few people do it, the procedure is complex; also 1% law, increasingly popular in the last 10 years).

Culture of giving It's **easy** (donations at online checkouts, 1% law, crowdfunding increasingly popular) and **unusual** for people to donate to human rights NGOs.

World Giving Index 27% of people report donating to a charity in the month prior to being asked. The country ranks 68th out of 139 worldwide.

Their motivation

Why did KPH (Campaign Against Homophobia) start individual fundraising? Chaber explains that “KPH needed to become more sustainable. That meant finding funding that’s harder to lose than a big core grant, or than project funding. We wanted to link funding to our community, to involve people more.”

Their story

“Before our real efforts started, three people were transferring money to our bank account... and we hardly knew why.” That was in 2014, when Chaber and their team decided to try fundraising more seriously.

They started from square one, with a survey. “We asked a few questions to our Facebook followers, our supporters, people on our mailing lists: did they know they could donate to KPH? Had they ever done it? Did they know about the 1% law [allowing taxpayers to redirect 1% of their tax to a charity]? We found the majority had never even thought of it, but were open to the idea.”

Next, they put together a database of **potential donors**. They included people identified as past or current supporters who they had permission to contact. This led to 14,000 names and e-mail addresses.

“Advocacy sounds obscure, and doesn’t motivate people. So instead of talking about our advocacy, we engaged these 14,000 people directly: every time something happened in parliament, we told them to sign a petition, or to e-mail the speaker with one click.”

They tracked all this online activity, so they knew exactly who clicked on what links, in how many campaigns. Their next move was to transform these supporters into **first-time donors**.



We found people were more likely to donate if they previously signed a petition online.

Chaber, Campaign Against Homophobia

“We started asking petition signers to give small amounts for specific projects – like 20 or 50 złoty (€5–10) for an event at the parliament, or a training course for teachers. We did this in sync with the news: something happened in schools? We asked to support a campaign against school violence.”

They then searched within that new group to find potential **monthly donors**: “We found the most engaged small donors in that group, and asked them to think about giving monthly. This worked with many people, and finally generated money for our permanent needs, like our office and salaries.”

“That was only the beginning. The last two years, we’ve included fundraising in all our activities. Every publication now includes a letter asking for donations. Every event has a fundraising leaflet or speech. Every team member plays a part, which greatly helped grow the number of donors.”

They also keep donors active: “We make sure to thank them, stay in touch, and ask them to donate again when the time comes. Every three months, we e-mail donors to show what their money helped achieve. Once a year, we send paper letters with a tiny gift. A lot of people reply, and they’re not always the same.”



© agata kubis

KPH's tattoo support day

Finally, they also went looking for **major donors**. They looked in their database for people giving at least 1,200 złoty (€300) in a single year. “We then think about our common interests and values, get in touch, understand what they care about, and ask whether they can donate more.”

“Then we organise a one-to-one meeting. We approach them with a lot of respect: we tell them what we’re doing, and what more money could help us achieve.”

The result? Individual donations now represent around 20% of KPH’s income. In 2017, they received around 400,000 złoty (€93,000), 25% more than in 2016 (320,000 złoty/€74,000).

Their challenges

These impressive efforts require a lot of time. “Keeping current donors informed and finding new ones is really time-consuming, and we don’t have a fundraising officer. I do a lot of it, my colleagues do too. But it really depends on what else keeps us busy.”

Chaber recalls two other challenges. One was technical: “We sent out a campaign e-mail asking people to donate quickly, because something was happening three days later. We discovered that our servers were too slow, and had been sending these e-mails until the day after the deadline!”

And the other one ethical: “One donor wanted to support a very specific project, which didn’t need more money. We can usually explain this and negotiate so donors support other projects, but this time they wouldn’t change their mind. So we had to decline their money, because we couldn’t accept it with these conditions attached.”

Their assessment

“Our success isn’t only about money. Our donors are genuinely engaged, we can count on them. For example, some donors are now happy to help us organise events and distribute publications in cities across Poland. People care.”

Their resources

They found fundraising courses organised by Open Society Foundations in recent years helpful. Chaber also follows a Polish training course for fundraising by politically

active NGOs, which includes online and physical meetings, webinars and exchanges of good practice between fundraisers.

“I also subscribe to a couple of newsletters from fundraising schools. It’s repetitive, but sometimes I find useful tips.”

Their advice

“When I run trainings, people always say there’s no culture of donating in their country. I always reply that when we started in 2014, no human rights organisation was ever asking people for money. Amnesty International and Greenpeace did, but they do that worldwide. We started it, and many organisations followed. People are increasingly used to being asked for money now. Go ahead and push through that first phase!”

On the web: **Their donation page** (in Polish) / **Their 1% donation page** (in English) / **Their website** (in Polish)



Czech Republic: Fully embracing individual donations

PRAGUE PRIDE

#events #facetoface #international #general #project
#large



By now, individual fundraising is almost second nature to Prague Pride and Czeslaw, its Chairman. Through a dizzying amount of initiatives, Prague Pride earns over 50% of its annual income from individual donations.

Context for LGBTI people

- **Rights** LGBTI rights are achieved at 29%
- **Ranking** 29th out of 49 countries rated in the ILGA-Europe Rainbow Index 2017

Context for individual donations

Legal and financial regulations No restrictions, and **no incentives** for donations to NGOs.

Culture of giving It's **easy** and **somewhat usual** for people to donate to human rights NGOs. (SMS donations, bank transfers, public collections are possible).

World Giving Index 18% of people report donating to a charity in the month prior to being asked. The country ranks 100th out of 139 worldwide.

Their motivation

Starting individual fundraising was obvious to Czeslaw: “We just needed money to do our work!” He explains that public funding in the Czech Republic has hardly benefited LGBTI work. When Prague Pride started in 2010, “only about 1% of our budget came from public money – and this was from a government agency for tourism.” So they wanted to build a solid base for income.

Their story

Fundraising at Prague Pride takes many forms, but it’s always closely linked to their other activities.



We tried everything. Some things were more successful, some were less successful, and we’re still learning. Every day is two steps of success, and one step of failure.

Czeslaw Walek, Prague Pride

Prague Pride started by hosting the annual Pride festival alone, so this is where their fundraising happened. “We **collected money around the festival** in every possible way: we had tin boxes to collect cash on the street, we invited bank transfers...”

“We had a special account for donations, allowing people to transfer money while remaining anonymous. This was helpful to receive money, but made it impossible to stay in touch with donors. Since then, we moved to an online system to keep donors’ e-mail addresses and invite them to our events.”

Prague Pride started many more projects since 2013 – and their fundraising diversified in sync.



One of Prague Pride's cooking classes

One example? **Cooking classes:**

“Renowned chefs accepted to come for free, and we could charge around 2,500 koruna [€100] per person. People attending these are among our most committed donors to this day.”

Another example: **charity theatre.**

“We started running theatre plays linked to a specific cause or campaign. With an entrance fee

of 1,000 koruna [€40], our most successful play yet raised 80,000 koruna [€3,100] for marriage equality.”

They host **charity races**, too. “We set up a low entrance fee of 200 koruna [€8] because we weren't sure how many people would join. But this first edition was successful: 304 runners came, generating about 63,500 koruna [€2,500]. And it also created a nice buzz on social media.”

They also **fundraise from individuals through employers.**

In a partnership with Vodafone, the telecom company agreed to raise money from its employees to fund Prague Pride's new peer support platform for LGBTI people. “They collected 106,000 koruna [€4,100], which the Vodafone Foundation doubled to 213,000 [€8,200]... our annual cost for this project. They've effectively balanced the whole budget for that platform.”

Finally, Prague Pride also has a few **major donors.** During his year-long stay in the United States as a student, Czeslaw networked his way to well-off individuals who committed to donating every year for three years. “This was hard work and a little bit of chance, but it paid off.”

Their challenges

“There are always challenges! The biggest is our capacity: it takes a lot of time to stay in touch with major or regular donors, for example. We’d like to find a good full-time fundraiser in the Czech Republic, but it seems impossible.”

“Next year, we’ll buy software to manage our donor database and keep track of what e-mails they open, where they click, and so on.”

Their assessment

“We wouldn’t have fundraised from individuals if public funding had been available in 2010. But today, individual donations represent over 50% of our income. We can say it’s a success.”

Their resources

They networked, built trust, and worked with individual donors and companies in the Czech Republic from the start, which represents a lot of work. Czeslaw used his year-long stay as a student in the United States to identify major donors. He did this through networking, getting to the right people and resources slowly, new connection after new connection.

Their advice

“No one likes fundraising, because it’s tiring and difficult. But it’s never impossible, even in Central Europe. There’s always someone willing to open their wallet for your issue. You just have to understand what to ask them, and what you can offer them.”

On the web: [Their donation page](#) / [Their website](#)

Switzerland: Hiring part-time staff and fundraising at Pride

TGNS – TRANSGENDER NETWORK SWITZERLAND

#facetoface #general #midsize



Transgender
Network
Switzerland

Stefanie, Co-President, explains how her organisation managed to hire a part-time general manager, and reached a (very good) 20% success

rate when fundraising at a Pride festival – all through trial and error.

Context for LGBTI people

- **Rights** LGBTI rights are achieved at 31%
- **Ranking** 26th out of 49 countries rated in the ILGA-Europe Rainbow Index 2017

Context for individual donations

Legal and financial regulations No restrictions, and **incentives** for donations to general-interest NGOs (some tax is deductible).

Culture of giving It's both **easy** and **usual** for people to donate to human rights NGOs.

World Giving Index 51% of people report donating to a charity in the month prior to being asked. The country ranks 22nd out of 139 worldwide.

Their motivation

Why did TGNS start individual fundraising? They felt this was a good option compared to others, more complex.

“We’re a membership-based organisation, but we want to be accessible to anyone so our membership fee is very low. As for Swiss foundations, none prioritise LGBTI issues – and much less trans issues! It’s hard to get their money, it’s only project funding, and we always need to educate them about our issues.”

Their story

TGNS has sought individual donations from their very first days, in 2010. But two years ago, things evolved: “It just became too much work for our organisation, ran by voluntary board members.”

One member wanted to help TGNS get a **part-time general manager**. “He just went ahead, called 30 people in his network, and asked if they would join him in donating a small amount every month for two years. People agreed to give between 20 and 100 francs (€15–90) each, allowing us to hire a manager for one day per week during two years.”

“This summer, the other co-president and I called these people to thank them, and tell them what this had achieved. 4 in 5 renewed their commitment for another two years, and some even doubled their pledge!”

Stefanie also recalls their **fundraising success at Pride events**.

“We’re not well-established enough that we can say ‘We need money’, and it’ll come. We know our best chance is when we physically meet people. So we took fundraising to the street.”

TGNS set up their booth at the Zürich Pride festival. “We printed A4 signs saying ‘Support trans people! SMS this number to donate 7.65 francs [€6.50]. Thank you!’. We just went up to people, and politely asked them to donate.”

One smart trick: they didn’t give the flyers away. “Otherwise, people would have taken them and never donated”. Instead



Meloe, Board member of TGNS, fundraising at Pride

volunteers held the paper, and invited people to donate on the spot with their mobile phone. “This forced them to decide there and then.”

“We talked to every passer-by. We politely asked if they wanted to give us seven francs, which led to conversations about why we needed it. 1 in 5 people gave, either with their mobile or in cash. We raised 2,500 francs [€2,200]... that’s ten times more than in previous years!”

Their challenges

Through trial and error, Stefanie and her team understood that donations require personal conversations every time. “One time, we organised an event and asked people to donate with a microphone from the stage. I asked the same things as in personal conversations, but this just didn’t work, hardly anyone gave money. Personal conversations are the only thing that works. And this means one or two people at a time; three is already too many, it doesn’t show that you value potential donors.”



When you fundraise, you definitely need outgoing people who aren’t afraid of asking. If they can’t ask personally and genuinely, people will never give.

Stefanie, TGNS

Their assessment

“We were the only LGBTI organisation actively fundraising at Zürich Pride, but we’ll definitely do it again. Sure, the mobile donation company charges a small fee per donation. But that’s better than no donations at all. It also worked thanks to a great spot: our booth was in the middle of a narrow street, people couldn’t avoid us.”

Their resources

“I just used Google!” Stefanie explains she spent a while searching answers to “How to fundraise”, which gave her many ideas for local fundraising.

Their advice

“Try small things first, so it doesn’t matter if you fail, and it’s encouraging if it works.”

“Refusals are disheartening, but you get good surprises. When we called that small group to renew funding for the part-time position, after 15 minutes of conversation one person decided to give 3,500 francs [€3,000]! She had supported us before, but we had no clue it would be so much this time.”

“And be open to suggestions. If dancing on the table works, dance on the table! Don’t give your soul away, obviously. But if it’s reasonable, go ahead and do it.”

On the web: [Their donation page](#) / [Their website](#) (both in French/German/Italian)



One of LIG's co-founders presenting the fund

France: Starting a lesbian fund from scratch

LIG – LESBIENNES D'INTÉRÊT GÉNÉRAL

#events #facetoface #solidarity #midsize




Two years ago, eight lesbian activists realised there was no money for lesbian causes or lesbian-led projects in France. So they created their own fund. Their goal: generate resources to advance lesbian causes, and grow a culture of financial support among their community.



Context for LGBTI people

- **Rights** LGBTI rights are achieved at 71%
- **Ranking** 5th out of 49 countries rated in the ILGA-Europe Rainbow Index 2017



Context for individual donations

Legal and financial regulations There are **no restrictions** for individuals to donate to NGOs. There are **notable incentives**: donors can reduce their income tax by two thirds of the amount they donated (a €30 donation ends up costing €10).

Culture of giving It's **easy** and **very usual** for people to donate to human rights NGOs. Donors can use purpose-made crowdfunding platforms, two-click online payments, micro-donations, toll-free SMS and phone numbers, and bank partnerships with NGOs to donate.

World Giving Index 30% of people report donating to a charity in the month prior to being asked. The country ranks 56th out of 139 worldwide.

Their motivation

Why did Alix, President of LIG, and her seven co-founders start raising funds from individuals? There were two reasons: "First, we realised there was no money available to lesbian projects in France. LGBTI funders are few and far between,

and they all had other priorities. And second, unlike gay men or people working on HIV/AIDS, there was no giving culture in the lesbian community. Where did lesbian money go? We had to tap into that.”

Their story

To explore these two challenges (no money available, and no giving culture), the team created a small foundation in 2016: Lesbiennes d’Intérêt Général (General-Interest Lesbians). They gathered €15,000 of initial endowment, and went to meet their community.

“Our two missions – collect and redistribute money, and grow a culture of lesbian philanthropy – are inextricably linked. When we present LIG at lesbian cultural festivals, we go on stage with a notary to also offer free legal advice on donations or marriage. Or we tell the audience about lesbian history and well-known figures. It’s not only money. We want to increase our community’s ability to care for itself, help them realise it’s possible and necessary.”

It’s not all about big donations. They look for small donations, regular donations, larger one-off donations for those who can afford them, legacy gifts, online donations... “We want lesbian women to realise giving takes many forms, and that it’s good to give back to your community.”



Until just a few decades ago, money was a male issue. We want to empower our community to show them it doesn’t have to be, that we can sustain ourselves too.

Alix, LIG

A year and a half after setting up, they disburse all the money they're collecting – to show it makes a difference. “So far, we've given out €4,500 across three lesbian projects in France and one abroad). We have about 10 monthly donors, and receive many one-off donations.”

What's on the horizon for LIG? “In two years' time, we want to have 50 recurring donors, and the patronage of one or two well-known lesbian figures from the cultural or business sectors to increase our visibility. We're also planning regular events to raise awareness around philanthropy, and set up a prize to help budding lesbian artists for example.”

Their challenges

Their main challenge has been establishing strategic priorities. “Do we support any topic, and just scratch the surface? Or do we focus on one or two issues deeply and seriously, with the risk of turning away donors who aren't interested? This is crucial, and so tricky to manage.”

Another question rears its head: “Is there room for men in our project? Some men donate, and we welcome that. But so far, we've only used female contractors and consultants. Should we be mixed or non-mixed?”

The team plans to discuss these questions during a strategic planning weekend.

Their assessment

This stands out about LIG: they understand their community extremely well. “We think our double focus – raising funds, but also building a culture of community philanthropy – really makes sense. People welcome it, they understand the double need. We feel we're onto something.”

Their resources

LIG enjoys the right skillset thanks to a complementary team: speaking English, good writing skills, a strong network

of media contacts, access to the arts and culture worlds, deep knowledge of lesbian organisations in Africa, legal and professional knowledge of philanthropy...

Alix also recognises that “the lesbian community has welcomed us with open arms, and readily gave us stage access or exposure. This has been invaluable.”

Their advice

“Definitely take the time to do strategic planning at the beginning of a new project. Doing this will set your priorities, and your entire identity flows from that: your messaging, website, communication with donors... It’s crucial.”

“Also take the time to pick the right legal structure, as they all have advantages and drawbacks.”

“And most importantly: call us! We’d love to see more lesbian fundraising, and we’ve already helped others set up new initiatives.”

On the web: [Their donation page](#) / [Their website](#) (in French)



Netherlands: Individual donations to support small community groups

BOB ANGELO FUND

#events #facetoface #solidarity #large



MEDE MOGELIJK GEMAAKT
DOOR EEN BIJDRAGE VAN HET
BOB ANGELO FONDS

COC Netherlands set up the Bob Angelo Fund to bring individual donors' money to smaller, underserved groups in the LGBTI community. They operate a

system of small, flexible grants that wouldn't be available to community groups otherwise.

Context for LGBTI people

- **Rights** LGBTI rights are achieved at 64%
- **Ranking** 10th out of 49 countries rated in the ILGA-Europe Rainbow Index 2017

Context for individual donations

Legal and financial regulations There are **no restrictions** for individuals to donate to NGOs, and **tax incentives** (donations are 100% deductible, up to a portion of individual income).

Culture of giving It's **very easy** and **very usual** for people to donate to human rights NGOs.

World Giving Index 64% of people report donating to a charity in the month prior to being asked. The country ranks 7th out of 139 worldwide.

Their motivation

Why did COC Netherlands set up the Bob Angelo Fund? Koen, its Director, and Petra, Fund Manager, recall there have always been a few spontaneous private donations to COC Netherlands. But until recently, they lacked a strategy to acquire donations.

“We have a tradition of paid membership, and relatively good core funding from our government since the 1980s. But we often received requests to help small community initiatives and groups across the country, with less access to funding. In our privileged position, we thought we should support them by channelling donations to them.”

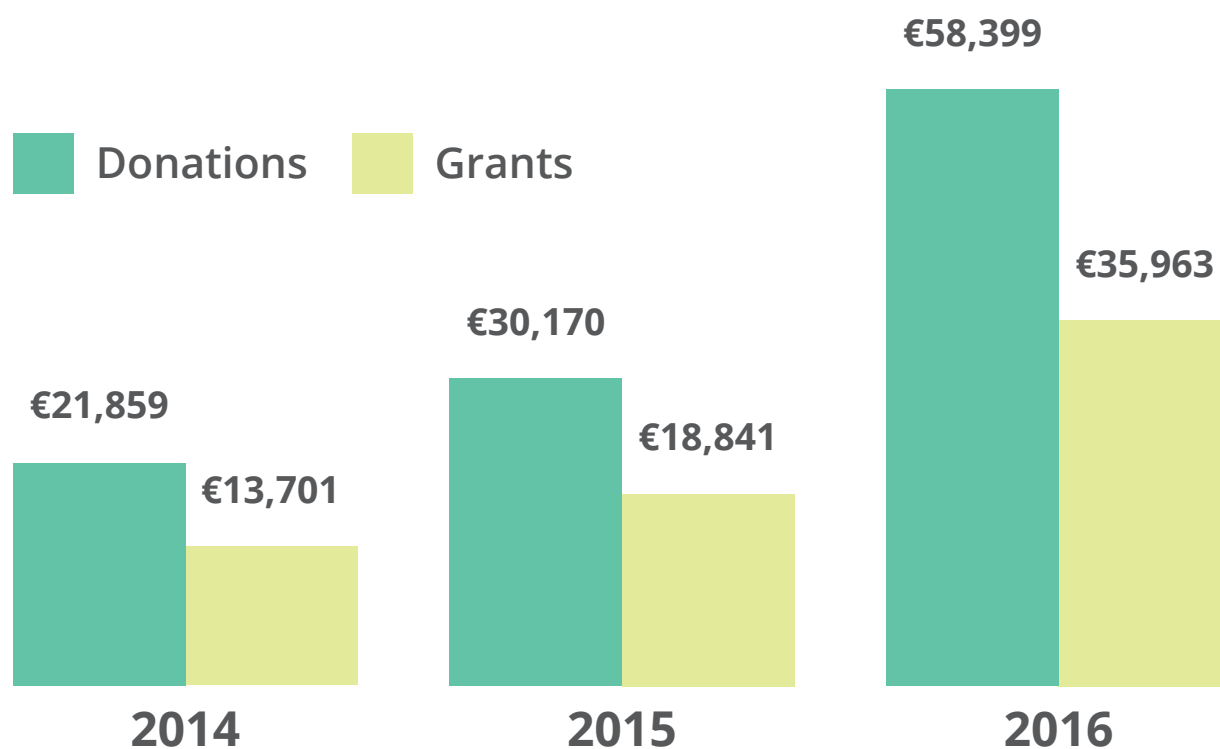
Their story

COC Netherlands set up the fund in 2012. Bob Angelo was the pseudonym of Niek Engelschman, one of COC’s co-founders in 1946.

How do they collect money? “Believe it or not, we’re still exploring! We started by **selling tickets** for our New Year’s event, True Colours. We wanted to allow partygoers to support the community more actively.”

“We’ve since expanded our fundraising channels. We now organise **silent auctions and raffles** with goods or vouchers gracefully donated by partners; encourage people to host **Christmas lunches** at work, where they collect money for us; or organise **cocktail nights at LGBTI bars**, who then donate their benefits to the fund.”

In 2016, the fund had received nearly €60,000 in donations, and gave out €36,000 in grants (both double 2015 amounts). And how do they use it?



The fund's earnings and spending in 2014–2016

The Bob Angelo Fund provides grants of up to €1,000 to help underserved LGBTI groups make their place in the wider LGBTI community. “We know very well that our wider community isn’t as welcoming as it should be to people of colour, sometimes. Or that fewer commercial venues attract lesbian women, focusing on men instead. Or that older, or hard-of-hearing, or refugee LGBTI people can struggle to find a place under the rainbow umbrella.”

Applying to the fund is purposely informal, so groups with a low degree of organisation can apply. But when COC found that groups would sometimes apply for funds just days before an activity was due to start, they streamlined the application process with a short application form, complete with a budget and application deadlines. Incomplete applications are followed up with a phone call or e-mail.

Reporting is also very light on purpose: “We don’t want to impose intense requirements on grantees who have better things to do.” They’re only asked to provide a short narrative

report of their activity, and a few photos to prove it took place. No receipts are required, thanks to the initial budget.

Former grantees can reapply, although COC doesn't want grantees to turn fully dependent.

Their challenges



The main issue today is that we don't have a strategy to find and mobilise donors. We think this makes us miss a lot of potential donors.

Koen and Petra, COC Netherlands

A learning point has been branding: "After a while, we ran focus groups to ask donors how they had experienced our fundraising. Two lessons emerged: first, we hadn't asked for money explicitly enough. And second, donors found the two names – COC Netherlands, Bob Angelo Fund – confusing. We found it was best to fundraise as COC Netherlands because of our trustworthy reputation, and to grant money as the Bob Angelo Fund."

Another learning point has been strategic priorities: "We made strategic choices right from the start. For example, we don't want to fund educational projects, panel discussions or media productions: those are costly, and frankly there is no shortage of Dutch funding for these. Instead we focus on mobilising communities among underserved groups in the LGBTI community. By now, we've grown to a size that allows proactively reaching out to communities and organisers that haven't yet found their way to us."

Their assessment

They're glad to support underserved parts of the LGBTI community. "We help people meet peers, network, and ultimately find the courage to manage their own visibility and find their own voice to make a difference in the world. The fund amplifies the voices of women, people of colour, refugees or migrants, or elderly people for example. We hope to create a stronger and more diverse LGBTI community."

"Now is the time to professionalise further: we want to adopt a mobilisation strategy to reach the individual donors who don't know about us yet. And we also see an opportunity in getting money from corporations, to channel that to these smaller LGBTI groups and community initiatives."

Their resources

The Bob Angelo Fund benefited from COC Netherlands' consequent resources and infrastructure, as well as a mindful approach to fundraising and grant-making. This included growing the team at the right time, and hiring two external advisers: one at the beginning to set up the fund, and one currently to help the director assess applications.

Their advice

"Potential donors are best motivated by making the fund's purpose very clear, what their donation contributes to. So transparent and engaging reporting on the fund's achievement is key."

On the web: [Their website](#) (in Dutch)

Denmark: Dinner parties for international solidarity

FEMALE OXYGEN

#events #merchandise #solidarity #midsize

female oxygen 

With their NGO Female Oxygen, Anne Mette (Co-founder and Board member) and her friends throw parties for the benefit of

lesbian groups elsewhere in the world. Their grassroots work is anchored in their local community, runs on the organisers' personal resources and deep enthusiasm, and remains strong after eight years of activities.

Context for LGBTI people

- **Rights** LGBTI rights are achieved at 68%
- **Ranking** 8th out of 49 countries rated in the ILGA-Europe Rainbow Index 2017

Context for individual donations

Legal and financial regulations No restrictions, but **no incentives** either for individual donations to NGOs.

Culture of giving It's **very easy** (e.g. SMS or mobile app donations) and **very usual** for people to donate to human rights NGOs.

World Giving Index 54% of people report donating to a charity in the month prior to being asked. The country ranks 18th out of 139 worldwide.

Their motivation

Why did they start raising funds from individuals? “We all met while volunteering at the 2009 World Outgames. We ran the outreach programme [to bring activists from the Global South to Copenhagen] and the women’s spaces, and loved seeing a global community of LGBTI activists come together for a week. We wanted to keep helping our sisters in India and elsewhere.”

Their story

Anne Mette and her friends started a new local organisation, Female Oxygen, to **host parties and collect money** for lesbian and bisexual women in the Global South.

They decided to start raising funds for VIKALP and Parma, two lesbian organisations in the Gujarat province of India they had met at the World Outgames. Their first party generated around 30,000 kroner (€4,000), which they sent to India.

After visiting them in Gujarat with their personal funds, Anne Mette and her friends set out to collect more funds through a new party, and **selling merchandise.**

“We really wanted to tell the story of the shelter they were building. So we found a Danish brick factory, Petersen Teglg, who agreed to make



1,500 bricks were made and sold to raise funds for a lesbian shelter in India

1,500 small artisanal bricks with 'Love' written on them in Hindi. Together with the new party, this raised another 80,000 kroner [€10,750] for this shelter in India."

After that, they organised more parties for the benefit of lesbian-led projects worldwide: a book on corrective rape in Jamaica, IT and office supplies for an organisation in Uganda, networking and workshops on health for lesbian women in Ecuador, the Baltic Pride in Lithuania... They organise two parties every year, each gathering around 500 participants identifying as women. They communicate mostly through Facebook, where they have 2,200 fans.

"We call what we do 'funny fundraising': our parties are always themed in relation to the place we support. When we fundraised for lesbian women in the Faroe Islands, we organised a big knitting competition – people loved it!"

They recently turned their attention to LGBTI refugees in the Middle East: "Before supporting an organisation, we research them ourselves. This year, we wanted to help people fleeing war-torn countries like Syria. We studied several options and talked to many people before selecting SPoD, a Turkish organisation providing psychosocial support to LGBTI refugees. Our latest party raised 25,000 kroner [€3,250], and we've encouraged them to reach out more to lesbian and bisexual women."

Anne Mette explains they couldn't throw these parties without partnerships: "One of our volunteers works in a movie decor school, and they always produce great decors for our parties. We also find sponsors to donate raffle gifts at each party. Liqueur shops donate wine; bookshops, books; a regional airline, flight tickets; a famous liqueur brand even provided free drinks for an Oktoberfest-themed party once."



We really have three legs: our group of organisers, the lesbian community supporting us in Denmark, and the groups we support abroad who bring so much meaning and insight to our work.

Anne Mette, Female Oxygen

Their challenges

Female Oxygen ran into administrative challenges: “Laws on money-laundering and counter-terrorism mean we must give lots of details about who the money goes to, especially in the Middle East and North Africa. We provided all the documents to the government, but it was annoying.”

Anne Mette also explains there have been a few internal tensions. “In a volunteer-led group, emotions sometimes run high. We lost three members because of arguments or tensions. But we all hate conflict, so we worked with a coach during a weekend to help define our roles and how we could work together better. This was very useful.”

Their assessment

Although they’re all volunteers, Anne Mette and her friends managed to make a real difference, in Denmark and elsewhere. “Female Oxygen is a big part of our lives and our identities. We all have very different professional profiles. You’d never employ a crazy group like this! But it’s complementary, and it works!”

Their resources

All nine women running Female Oxygen had experience (and for some, specific training) as volunteers or volunteer managers during the World Outgames in 2009.

Their advice

“In our group, some of us think the parties are the best, some think it’s the fundraising and supporting groups abroad that’s most important. It’s complementary: one approach couldn’t work so well without the other – so collaborate!”

On the web: [Their website](#)



6. Resources

This guide is but a starting point, and countless other resources – most of them free – can help you start or dramatically improve your fundraising efforts.

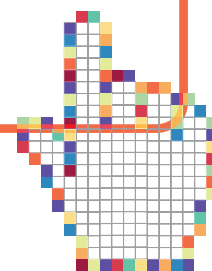


We list a few trustworthy resources below, ranging from PDF guides to web articles to YouTube videos to books. Most come from the United Kingdom or United States, where the fundraising industry is extremely well established.

Yet in our increasingly globalised world, the methods, tactics and ideas they propose will often work in other contexts too.

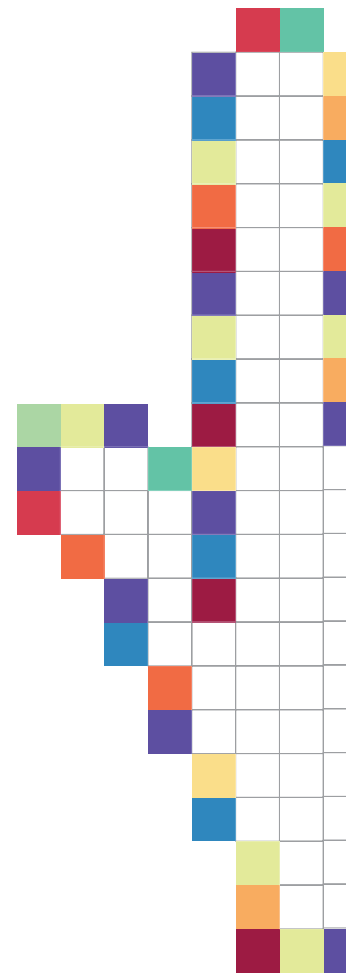
For direct links and downloads, head to:

www.ilga-europe.org/fundraisingresources

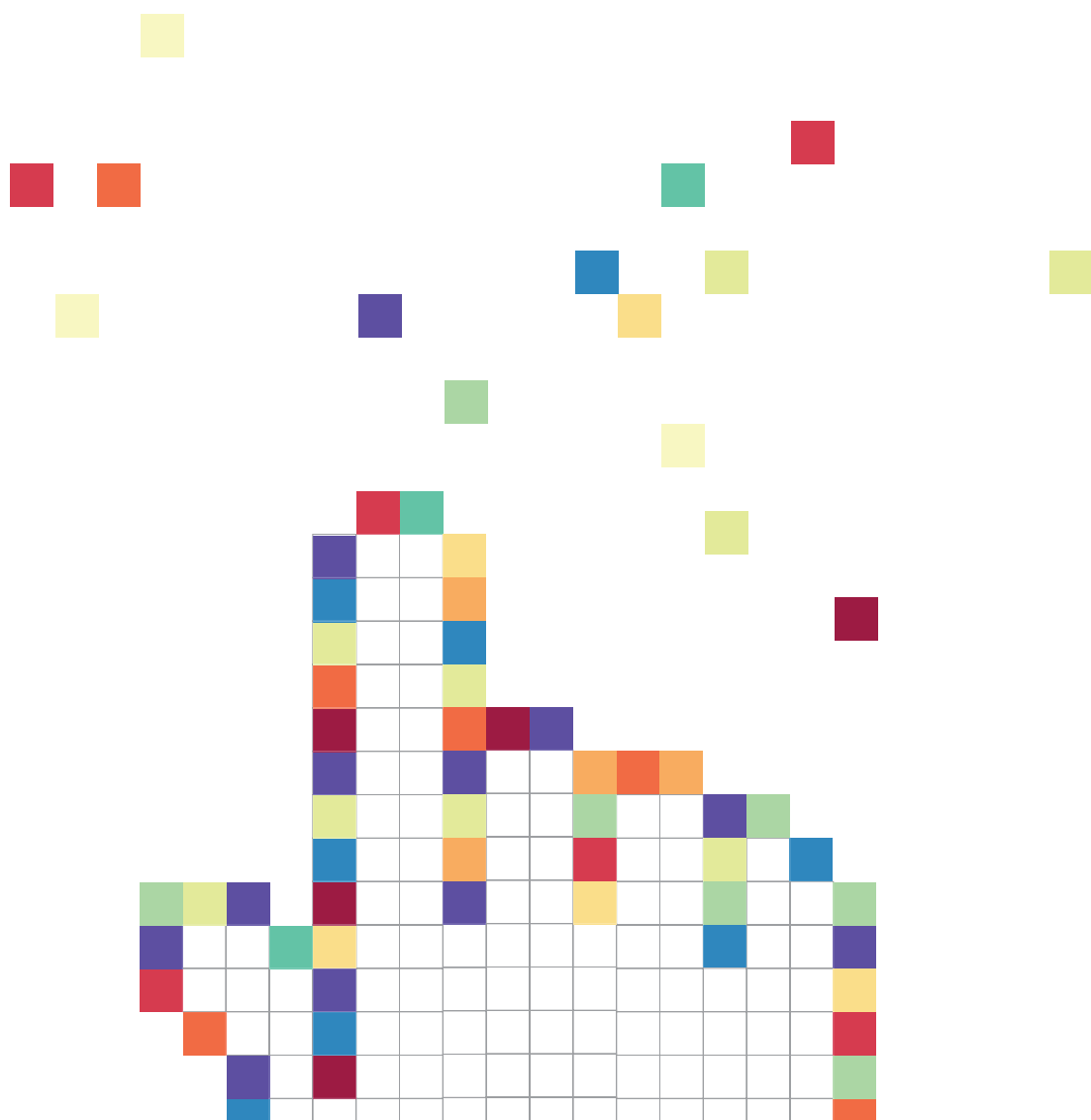


- The **Institute of Fundraising** offers numerous resources and guidance sheets on several fundraising disciplines, including raising funds from individuals. Look for the section *Guidance and resources*. Their **YouTube channel** has webinars and 5-minute videos on topics such as creating your fundraising strategy, introduction to community fundraising, legacy fundraising, and many more. They also provide training (€).
- The **Directory of Social Change** also provides online guidance and a selection of books. Look for the category Fundraising > Individual donors. They also provide training (€).

- Short on ideas for fundraising activities? The **LGBT Foundation** published *Guide to fundraising*, a list of suggestions for fundraising activities at work, at home, in your community, and around public holidays.
- The UK LGBT charity **Stonewall** published *Fundraising for Stonewall*, a resource for people wishing to raise money for the organisation. Don't hesitate to use these ideas for your own fundraising!
- Do you have an elevator pitch? If your answer is "What's an elevator pitch?" (or if answering takes you longer than one minute), you must develop a better answer. Countless blog posts and websites offer advice. Just search for "non-profit elevator pitch", or start with **The Big Mistake That's Hurting Your Nonprofit (and How to Fix It)** or **Create the Perfect Fundraising Pitch with this Easy Template**.
- On the **Grantspace Knowledge Base**, a service of the Foundation Center, the article **How can I learn about researching and cultivating individual donors?** explores finding and keeping track of potential donors (prospects). Check out their podcast episode **Getting Started with Individual Donors**, as well as the links *Donor Cultivation*, *Find Individual Donors*, and *Individual Giving* at the bottom of the article.
- The consulting firm **Social Misfits Media** specialises in social media presence and management for NGOs, and published two insightful fundraising reports: *Make it Rain*, on how to run successful non-profit crowdfunding campaigns; and *Friends with Money*, on fundraising through social media. Head to their **Publications** section.



- You'll find at least two interesting resources on the website of the firm **Klein & Roth Consulting**. First, they publish a free newsletter worth reading. Subscribe and find past volumes in the section Tips & Tools > Newsletters. Second, Klein & Roth co-founder Kim Klein authored the book *Fundraising for Social Change*: a true mine of information on starting, maintaining and growing your fundraising efforts (€). Although very U.S.-centric, it offers a solid framework for fundraising, is extremely well organised, and provides countless relevant tips. It's particularly good for fundraising events, and a very worthwhile investment. The book *The Accidental Fundraiser: A Step-by-Step Guide to Raising Money for Your Cause* is also worth checking out. You'll find both in the **Books** section of their website.
- Finally, the **Global Philanthropy Project** also maintains **a list of articles and publications on individual donors**.



ILGA-Europe



ILGA-Europe – the European Region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) – is a non-governmental umbrella

organisation bringing together 500+ organisations from over 50 European and Central Asian countries.

ILGA-Europe is a driving force for political, legal and social change at European level. Our vision is of a world where dignity, freedoms and full enjoyment of human rights are protected and ensured to everyone regardless of their actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics.

The two main pillars of ILGA-Europe’s work are advocating for human rights and equality for LGBTI people at European level, and strengthening the European LGBTI movement by providing training and support to its member organisations.

- www.ilga-europe.org
- donate@ilga-europe.org

The Global Philanthropy Project



The **Global Philanthropy Project (GPP)** is a collaboration of funders and philanthropic advisors working to expand global philanthropic support to advance the human

rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) people in the Global South and East.

Established in 2009, GPP's 18 member organisations include many of the leading global funders and philanthropic advisors for LGBT rights.

As the first international cohort of LGBT funders, GPP is internationally recognised as the primary thought leader and go-to partner for donor coordination around global LGBTI work.

- www.globalphilanthropyproject.org
- info@globalphilanthropyproject.org

Available from:

www.ilga-europe.org/fundraisingresources
