



No.2 How to Raise Funds for Children's Play

Introduction

This factsheet is designed to act as a guide to help you to secure funding towards a project on children's play. It covers the essential steps you need to think about in order to get your funding application beyond the funder's wastepaper bin. It also looks at the way you should aim to structure your application and identifies the principal sources of funding available.

The fundraising environment today is increasingly competitive and volatile. It is vital therefore that you know about your potential donor's needs and have a clearly defined strategy: the more planning and homework you do, the better the chances of success.

The Stages

1. *Plan ahead* as far as possible in advance of when you need the funding: many funders can take several months before giving a decision.
2. *Package your project* :
 - identify the 'USPs' (unique selling points) of your project and your organisation;
 - think about what the real need is : focus on the needs of your beneficiaries, not your organisation - do not just say we need a new play area or piece of equipment, but back up the statement with facts and figures and/or letters of support;
 - consider the outcomes: are they likely to be long-term and sustainable?; also consider the short and medium-term outcomes,
 - define the benefits, both to the children and the community;
 - make sure you know exactly how much funding you need.
 - think beyond the funding, and how the work will continue after current funding ends.
3. *Research*: the single most important factor to successful fundraising. It is vital to learn:
 - what are the funder's policies and priorities ?
 - whether the funder has any special area of current interest?

- if it will support revenue (salaries) core or capital projects?
 - how much is it likely to give? Use this as a guide for how much to ask for.
 - when is the right time to ask and what format is needed (e.g. application form)?
 - do they accept telephone calls to discuss the application? This can save you a lot of unnecessary time, if you can find out more from an administrator, they are generally quite helpful and you can sometimes get a better steer for the project aim and how much to ask for.
4. *Plan your Proposal* : this means gathering together and organising all your information and then deciding on how you are going to structure your funding proposal.
 5. *Write your Proposal* : you should now be in a position to communicate your messages as clearly as possible. See the section below on structuring an application.
 6. *Maintain Relationships with the Funder*: if they agree to support you, always thank them immediately; keep them informed and report back on how their money has been spent, updating them with key stage completions; invite them to see your work or to any event you may be planning; if it is part of the

agreement, ensure that all work that you produce includes their logo; always alert the funder to any problems that may occur, or if you want to make any changes. This relationship is vital if you are ever to ask the funder for continuance funding for this or a different area of work.

Always bear in mind that funders are looking for a proposal that is very focused and specifically targeted to their needs and priorities. The project should be properly costed and represent value for money. If your project is distinctive and innovative, and if a real sense of commitment and enthusiasm is conveyed in the proposal, then it is more likely to stand out from the crowd.

Note that many funders will only give grants to registered charities. Where there is an exception to the rule, you will need to have a written constitution, your own bank account, and audited accounts/annual reports.

How to Structure a Funding Application

There is no magic set formula. Each application must be tailored to the requirements of the funder. Always avoid sending a circular appeal to a host of different funding organisations. And, always complete the application form if they ask for it: if no form is necessary, a rule of thumb is to aim for two sides of A4 (excluding a detailed budget which is generally treated as separate unless otherwise stated). Use specific headings and, where necessary, bullet

points to avoid reams of text. The following provides a suggested framework:

1. *The Issue or Problem or Challenge* : it is good to bring out 'punchy' facts, e.g. 'x' no. of children in the area have lacked 'y' facility/service for 'z' no. of years. It is important to identify the issue you are looking to tackle and, ultimately, what you are asking the money for. Remember, funders respond to causes not organisations.
2. *Your Response*: how you plan to tackle the issue etc. - subject to getting the funding! Be careful of duplication of work – who else is working in the same field?
3. *Your Organisation*: summarise your aims and objectives; your track record and past successes; the type of activities you carry out; and how you operate.
4. *The Project*: describe the project itself and what it will deliver as clearly and concisely as possible. What are its 'USPs' ? What will happen and when?
5. *The Benefits and Outcomes*: relate these to the funder's interests. How many children will directly benefit and in what way? Bring out as many tangible impacts as possible.
6. *Monitoring and Evaluation*: what systems are in place to monitor the project; how will you know if it will be a

success? Monitoring is about **measuring** – use specific benchmarks. Evaluation is primarily about **judgement** – did the project have the desired effect?

7. *Dissemination*: set out how and when you intend to do this, and to whom?
8. *Funding Need*: be clear about why you need the money and what it is needed for. Is it for a specific piece of play equipment or service? How long do you want the grant for? Many funders like to see specific unit cost benefits, e.g. a grant of £x will pay for y people to do z.
9. *The Budget*: make this as clear and unambiguous as possible. Is everything included? Try to avoid terms such as 'salary' and 'overheads'. Don't forget, you can't go back and ask for more!
10. *Summary*: end off by summarising how a grant or donation will make a real difference for children and/or the community.

General Sources of Funding

Before searching out sources of funding, think creatively and laterally about how your project might be packaged to match the interests of potential funders. A scrapstore, for instance, could be just as attractive to an environmentally-focused funder as to a funder interested in children.

Statutory Funds/Local Authorities

Central government departments and local authorities can give grants to voluntary organisations. Details of information on grants available and application procedures can be obtained from the respective government offices departments and your local council's Chief Executive's department (ask for the local authority funding/grants adviser).

European Funding

There are two areas of funding that may be relevant to children's play: ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) and ESF (European Social Fund). But, be wary that European funding can be very difficult to understand and to access. Projects invariably will require collaboration with European partners - e.g. play projects in other EU Member states, and many will require matched funding. For further information, contact your local authority's European funding officer or your regional Government Office.

Companies

Companies can support voluntary organisations in a variety of ways, ranging from cash donations or sponsorship to gifts in kind. Increasingly today, companies are moving away from pure philanthropy towards community involvement/ community investment. They like to be seen as creating goodwill in the community and also amongst their workforce. They also want to be associated with particular causes that have clear relevance to their business. It is very advisable therefore to do your groundwork before making an approach. The company's

website is often a valuable source of background information.

Another tip is to find someone who has a link with the local company to make the approach for you.

Individuals

This is an area that needs a bit of time nurturing the relationship, but once you have someone 'on board' you will normally have a long-term funder dedicated to your cause. Research is the key to success, and it is worth exploiting your organisation's contacts to see who and how they can get funders signed up.

Lottery Funding

If you want to find out about the different grants available the Lottery Funding website allows you to search information on current funding programmes across the UK.

<http://www.lotteryfunding.org.uk/>

Access to Nature programme

Part of Changing Spaces, a programme investing in environment-led projects. Access to Nature is delivered by Natural England and will fund projects that encourage people to understand, access and enjoy the natural environment.

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/accesstonature>

Arts Council

Whilst there is not a specific priority on projects for children, these may be eligible if they have an arts focus. Funding is for capital projects only, not running costs.

Tel: 0845 300 6200

<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/>

Awards For All

This is a simple small grants programme making awards of between £300 - £10,000. The programme aims to help improve local communities and the lives of people most in need.

Tel. 0845 600 2040

<http://www.awardsforall.org.uk/>

Community Spaces

Part of Changing Spaces, a programme investing in environment-led projects. Community Spaces is delivered by Groundwork UK and will fund projects to help communities improve their local spaces, including play areas.

<http://www.community-spaces.org.uk/>

Heritage Lottery Fund

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has a number of grant giving programmes, including Parks for People and Young Roots. Some children's play and playground projects have received HLF funding.

Tel. 020 7591 6000

www.hlf.org.uk

Reaching Communities

This programme is for community-driven projects which benefits those most in need, including communities with shared interests. Communities should be involved throughout the life of the project. Primarily a revenue programme but can contribute towards capital costs. The aim of the funding is to enable people to have better chances in life; foster strong communities with more active citizens; improved rural and urban environment, which communities are better able to access and enjoy; and healthier

and more active people and communities.

Tel: 0845 4 10 20 30.

<http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/>

Sport England

Children's play activities are not usually considered unless they are sports-based projects that benefit children.

Tel:08458 508 508

<http://www.sportengland.org.uk/>

Charitable Trusts

There are around 9,000 charitable trusts in the UK, giving out over £1bn. per year. Some operate at a very local level; others are regional and national. Most tend to prefer specific projects, e.g. 'one-off' pieces of work, and not to contribute to ongoing running costs. Competition for grants is extremely high: on average, less than 10% of applications are successful. Detailed research into the trust's policies, priorities and procedures is therefore strongly recommended. Some of the larger charitable trusts that may be relevant for children's play and recreation include:

BBC Children In Need (but note the emphasis on disabled and disadvantaged children)

Tel:020 8576 7788

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/pudsey>

Biffaward

A Landfill Communities Fund scheme. Main grants to projects that provide or improve community spaces, cultural facilities and places for outdoor recreation, and for biodiversity projects. Small grants for projects that enable communities to

improve local amenities and to conserve wildlife.

<http://www.biffaward.org>

City Bridge Trust

Makes grants to charitable projects benefiting the inhabitants of Greater London.

<http://www.bridgehousegrants.org.uk/citybridgetrust/>

Esmee Fairbairn Foundation

Primary interests are in the UK's cultural life, education and learning, the natural environment, and enabling disadvantaged people to participate more fully in society.

<http://www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk/>

Lloyds TSB Foundation for England & Wales

Funds local, regional and national charities working to tackle disadvantage across England and Wales. The focus is on supporting small and medium underfunded charities that can make a significant difference to the lives of disadvantaged people.

<http://www.lloydstsbfoundations.org.uk/>

Paul Hamlyn Foundation

The Education and Learning Open Grants Scheme funds the development, implementation and dissemination of new ideas that have the potential to make a significant contribution to young people's learning and achievement.

<http://www.phf.org.uk/>

RBS Supergrounds Awards

Royal Bank of Scotland Supergrounds for primary schools is a £6m, six-year community programme that allows RBS Group employees to nominate their local school for a

Supergrounds Award. The delivery partner for Supergrounds Awards for primary schools is Learning through Landscapes, the national school grounds charity.

<https://www.rbssupergrounds.com/>

Tudor Trust

An independent grant-making charitable trust which exists to enhance people's quality of life. The majority of grants range between £10,000 and £100,000.

Tel. 020 7727 8522

<http://www.tudortrust.org.uk/>

Veolia Environmental Trust

The Trust is committed to supporting community and environmental projects across the UK. These could include projects aiming to install or enhance play areas and skate parks, restore footpaths and green spaces, protect natural habitats, improve community halls and restore churches.

<http://www.veoliatrust.org>

Funding Websites

Association of Charitable Foundations

The UK's national membership and support organisation for grant-making trusts and foundations of all types.

<http://www.acf.org.uk/>

Charities Aid Foundation

Information on tax-effective giving on the internet.

<http://www.cafonline.org/>

Funding Central

Funding Central is a website for all third sector organisations that provides access to funding opportunities. Offers guided

searches to help identify appropriate funding opportunities.
<http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk>

Government Funding Website

An online portal to grants for the voluntary and community sector from government departments.
<http://www.governmentfunding.org.uk/>

Grants Online

Access to information on funding opportunities from the European Union, the Government, the Lottery and regional grant-making bodies and trusts.
<http://www.grantsonline.org.uk/>

Fundinginformation.org

An online fundraising information resource for charities, voluntary organisations, community groups, local authorities and social enterprises. Subscription only service.
<http://www.fundinginformation.org/>

General Sources of Information

The Directory of Social Change

The DSC provides the UK's largest source of publications and guides for the voluntary sector. Its main publications are:

The Directory of Grant-Making Trusts (containing details of over 2,500 trusts)

A Guide to the Major Trusts (Volumes 1 & 2)

A Guide to Local Trusts in Greater London (versions are also available for the North of England; the South of England; and the Midlands), and *The Guide to UK Company Giving*
<http://www.dsc.org.uk/>

National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA)

Local associations may have information on local trusts or other sources of funding.
<http://www.navca.org.uk/>

National Council for Voluntary Organisations

NCVO provides information and advice for national and local groups.
<http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/>

Compiled by David Eggleston, 2001, revised by Anna Kassman-McKerrell February 2010

The Children's Play Information Service produces factsheets on a variety of play topics, and can also provide literature searches in response to individual requests.

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