



Educate  
Together

# Fundraising ideas **for Schools**

Hello,

The Fundraising Ideas for Schools pack was initially developed by Kate Morris who was the Communications Officer at Educate Together in 2004. It outlines some ideas for raising money within your school community. I have updated it and added some more ideas. Please give me a call or send me an email if you have anything you would like to contribute. Sharing resources can only strengthen and energise the Educate Together network as a whole. This document will also be found on our website under Get Involved/School Resources.

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Notes to keep in mind:

- All National Schools qualify as a charity. Contact revenue to organize this and get your charity number.
- You could combine a number of the ideas in this pack.
- Think about what resources you have, and match your fundraising activities to the resources available to you as a group. Some events are more suitable to an established organisation with a ready-made group of supporters, rather than a new concept in an area, with a small group of supporters.
- Look within your school community before contacting an outside company as there maybe a parent with the skills you need.
- Do not over stretch yourselves. It can be tempting to organize one big event, with a capital cost. Such events are risky and need to be carefully evaluated.
- Investigate all public facilities.
- Mix events eg. Pure fundraising events, fundraising/awareness building/social events.
- Have some family events.
- If you are going to operate on a profit-share or commission basis during an event make sure all involved, holders have the terms in writing before the event. Alternatively, charge them for the pitch: that way, your administration is much simpler.
- It is an idea to hang your event on another occasion for example Summer Solstice, St Patrick's Day, Know Racism Day, Blooms Day.

### **Antiques Roadshow/ Art Auction**

Separate or combined, both these events require the involvement of professionals. You need to find the venue and professional, experienced, assistance. Use all the contacts you know. You can organise refreshments, raffles and side stalls to help things along a bit!

### **Arts and Crafts Demonstrations**

Two main ways in which this can be done: a formal presentation by one or more artists or craftspeople, or an opportunity for your audience to wander round and see them practicing their skills.

They can always sell their products, and they might give a commission to the organiser's charity. A celebrity artist will be worth a full evening in their own right; the local craft guild may be pleased to show off before a new audience. Alternatively, there may be all sorts of talented people in your own community, just waiting to be asked to show their talents. Prices for tickets, raffles, and refreshments have to be determined when you have decided on your format.

### **Baby Rave** (Particularly useful for Start-up Groups)

Baby Rave is a unique interactive dance and music event for babies, children under 4 and parents, a real rave but child-sized, it can feature a live DJ, lights, projections, soft floor coverings and sensory toys. Find out within your school community whether you have a DJ /sound engineer or anyone who can help out with music. Find a location that will accommodate buggies. Ask around for people to donate sensory style toys and soft floor coverings. Make sure you have nappy changing facilities. Extra money could be made on selling drinks and child friendly food.

### **Class Photos**

Photographers will come in to your school and take the class photos and then directly sell them to your parents, a percentage of the sales then go towards the school. Make sure that it is clear to parents that this is a fundraiser for the school. Check to see if you have any photographer parents in the school before contracting an outside person.

### **Bake Sale**

Bake sales have long been one of the most popular ways of raising funds for schools. They can be great moneymakers because there is little or no actual capital required. Things to keep in mind for a successful fundraiser are; advertise as much as you can, make sure you have plenty of change to break larger notes on the day, present the cakes nicely and have paper bags for people to take the cakes home with them. Sweet food makes people thirsty so make sure you sell drinks as well - tea and coffee. Bake sales can be

*Some twists on the average run-of-the-mill bake sale*

Get a parent who is a chef or even with an interest in cooking and ask them to do a cooking demonstration.

Ask local shops or pubs to sell your cakes at the counter or by the till, customers can

throw €2 into a container and take a cake. Providing a container and small sign will remove the responsibility of selling from the shop or pub.

### **Barbeque**

Another very flexible format. For a (very) small fee, people will bring their own food to be barbecued. You can charge more if you supply the goods. A band, some entertainers, somewhere safe for the children, wet weather cover and a bar could also influence the salability of your event.

Remember too that you can barbecue far more than just sausages and burgers, though some dishes are better pre-cooked, and finished over the coals (especially formerly frozen chicken!). Look into food hygiene if you don't have experience.

### **Bridge/ Whist/ Beetle Drive**

You need someone who knows the game you are to play, to referee the night. You will need playing tables, which for card players means small square tables with non-reflective covers, though sometimes you can get the players to provide their own!

You charge admission, which can be individual, team or table, and provide light refreshments. You must also provide prizes for the winners. You can run a raffle, so long as it does not interfere with the game.

Remember, your players will be sitting in one position for a long time. A warm, draught-free venue is essential.

The same principle could be applied to most games, though these have, over the years, proved most successful because they combine social interaction with competition and skill.

### **Bring and Buy**

As above, a very flexible format, though a large scale Bring and Buy takes some organising. As the name suggests, you are asking people to bring an item to sell, and then to buy other goods.

Begin with a respectable show of items for sale. If the B&B is the main attraction, get your supporters to give their contributions well in advance. This is not the same as a Jumble Sale: you want tins, jars, handicrafts, bric a brac. Don't be afraid to refuse jumble or other forms of rubbish - they will lower the tone and depress the prices of good quality donations.

### **Buy a Brick/Tile**

Sometimes, organisations and individuals prefer to purchase specific items for projects. Your Charity may be able to help with specific targets for events or appeals.

### **Cheese and Wine**

A simple and economic function to arrange. There are many possible variations on the theme - First, find your wine merchant who will offer discount prices, sale or return, and glass loan. What wines does your merchant want to promote? Would he include a tasting? Then find your cheeses.

Some embassies have trade delegations that will offer promotion packs, and your local supermarket or delicatessen may be prepared to offer a range for tasting.

Provide appropriate entertainment.

Venue is very important, and could be a central feature of the event. Is there an interesting house or hall in your area? In any event, it must be warm and convivial.

Price your tickets as if you had to pay market rates for everything: if your tickets are too cheap you will give the impression of a cheap event.

It is important that a responsible attitude to alcohol consumption is promoted and such events are for adults only. Advertising alcoholic products within the school must be avoided.

### **Coffee Morning**

An enduring favourite because of its flexibility, a coffee morning can be as large or small as you wish. It can be simply an opportunity to meet other people over coffee, or it can be combined with any number of other activities. Fairtrade products may be promoted. You could hold one in your front room, or you could take the local hall or even better associate your morning with a well know café/ restaurant and get the photographers in!

### **Concert/Reading**

The first and last essential for these events is to match the venue and the type of entertainment. A nice old hall may fit nicely with a Shakespeare reading, while a nightclub may be more conducive for a live band. You may have the opportunity to use a celebrity, or a professional; if so, build the event round them.

### **Cooking with your School**

Create a cooking with your school cookbook. Ask children what their favourite meals are and create a healthy and fun cookbook. Contact a local printer to get them produced. Make sure to ask if they have a charity rate as all National Schools can apply to get a charity number. Online books are also becoming very popular and made be a cheaper alternative to printing.

### **Duck race**

You need will plastic ducks, a flowing river and a bridge or other dropping off point.

Number all your ducks, in such a way that the numbers won't come off in the water.

When you have sold all your ducks, assemble the spectators round the drop-off point.

You can either drop all the ducks together from a bridge, or line them up using a suitable obstacle. Once released, the winner is the first to cross the finish line.

There are two ways of making money off this event - you can sell the ducks, with the owner of the winning duck getting a prize, and you can also run a "book" on the event

You could add a couple of variations to this. Most people "sell" the ducks for the duration of the race, and collect them back for future use. You might, however, let the owners personalise their duck, to make it more streamlined.

Check with the owners of the river, or whoever is in charge of what goes on - 1000 ducks might be a hazard!

Make sure you collect all the ducks at the end of the race.

Any activity involving water is potentially dangerous. Watch for small children who may get over-excited and fall in, and make sure all your helpers have secure stations from which to carry out their tasks.

### **Food Tasting**

First, find your expert! Perhaps a friend or associate is involved in the Irish Slow Food Movement or knows an organic farmer, cheese monger..

If you have a local gourmet society, or even just some friends who are interested in food and drink, tie your event to their interests, and don't be afraid to discuss the idea with some of your prospective market. If they feel they have helped to plan the event, they may well help to sell the tickets.

Prices according to the product and venue, the range of tastes to savour and whether or not you get a percentage of sales from the event.

### **Gala Event**

Best to book the whole package from a hotel that runs these events all the time. However, you can do it all yourself with a team of voluntary assistants, preferably with some relevant amount of experience.

Venue is critical. If they do not have their own caterers, how will yours get in? Is there a kitchen? Is it fully equipped? Is there space for the band, electricity where they need it, enough space for dancing, and enough space round the tables for your serving staff?

Give careful thought to the menu: will the food stay hot and still look nice by the time you've brought it from the kitchens to the table?

Give careful thought to the entertainment, after dinner speakers etc. Make sure that your entertainers are fully briefed on the type of audience, and make sure that they are appropriate to the audience.

You can't do a cheap gala event, so make it good; don't cut corners, and charge accordingly. If you're putting in all this work, you want to make a good tidy sum at the end of it.

Don't undersell your event. Consider some sort of post meal auction.

### **Games/Sports and Tournaments**

It helps if you are interested and involved in the games or sports yourself, or if you can get a club to run the event for you.

Having said that, any competitive game or sport can be organised into a tournament, though a Monopoly tournament could take a long time to reach its conclusion!

You will need to organise the prizes and the registration procedure.

Does the tournament need to take place in one venue, in one day, or could the ties be spread about over a given period of time? A 5-a-side football competition could be run on a school playing field in one day, with several games in play at once (but remember that each game needs a referee and line officials).

Don't forget that SARI (Sports Against Racism Ireland) holds its annual Soccer Fest each year in September.

### **Jumble Sales**

Key points in organising a good Jumble Sale are:

Venue - is it accessible?

Jumble - where will you get your goods to sell?

Layout - have you got enough tables, rails etc, and can the customers get round all the stalls? (Could a customer in a wheelchair get round all the stalls?)

Helpers - have you got enough people to man the stalls?

Prices - they all want a bargain, but you want a profit! Select the best items for separate display; put realistic prices on them;

Refreshments - tea and biscuits will make people stay longer, and spend more money.

Raffles: raffles and tombolas always go down well, and a raffle drawn just before you want to finish your sale should keep the customers with you throughout your event.

Publicity - if they don't know, they won't come!

### **Occasion Cards**

Sell packs of cards at christmas or any other significant holiday. Check to see if there is parent in the school who is an artist and ask them to design a card for the school. Contact a local printer to get them produced. Make sure to ask if they have a charity rate as all National Schools can apply to get a charity number.

### **Quiz Night**

A very popular form of event in many areas: Try to get an established quiz given over to you for one night a week or month, or have one organised for you by the local pub or club. If you are running one yourself, you will need a warm, convivial venue. Set a maximum number of players per team, and lay out your tables accordingly.

Take great care appointing your quizmaster: if your teams come principally from the local youth club, they may be out of their depth with questions about quantum physics, Or have a themed quiz i.e. an Eastenders quiz night where every contestant has to dress up as a character! You provide the main prizes and spot prizes (which could be a cash portion of the entry fees); you make money on entry fees (individual or team?) and the inevitable raffle.

If you are interested in raising a significant amount of money you may want to look into 'Who Want to be a Thousandaire'. It is run by a marketing company in Nenagh. They say that profits will exceed €25,000. This is their website <http://www.thousandaire.ie/>. A number of Educate Together schools have done this in their schools and the feedback is that it is very time consuming but financially worthwhile.

### **Race Night/ Casino Night**

You can hire the whole package, including people to run the betting. For a Casino Night, you definitely need an expert on all the games, the odds.

Race nights are more straightforward. Sealed films (or videos) of six-horse/dog races can be hired on their own, if you have the equipment and expertise to run them yourself.

Equally, if you don't have a resident expert, you can hire someone to run the betting system.

The audience bet on the outcome of each race; the seals are broken in public view, and the tote pays out a percentage of the money placed in bets.

Prior to the event you can "sell the horses" (owners can name their horse, and stand to win a prize), and ask local companies to sponsor the races.



You need to supply prizes for the owners of the first three horses in each race (provided by the sponsor). You could keep the last race card clear to auction the horses on the night.

### **Raffle/Tombola**

Both of these need good quality, brand new prizes, or alternatively, items of unique interest. In a raffle, tickets are sold for the chance to win one of a number of prizes. When all the tickets are sold, or at a given point in time, a draw is made to determine the winners.

A raffle should never have too many prizes, because of the time it takes to draw them out; the audience may lose interest after the twelfth small prize.

A tombola is similar to a raffle, except that tickets are allocated to prizes in advance. The customer buys a ticket sealed in an envelope or crimped round the edges. They then open their ticket to see if they have won. There is no need to wait for a draw to take place. A tombola can hardly have too many prizes. Decide in advance what the winning numbers are going to be, and obtain your prizes accordingly. Commercial sets of tickets and prizes commonly have 30 or 40 prizes to 1000 tickets. You may wish to offer more by having some very small consolation prizes, especially if there are to be children at the event.

However, if you get embarrassed when people don't win, you should not run a tombola!

### **Run a 100/200/500 Club**

A 100 Club is a regular lottery. In principle, 100 people pay €1 per week for a chance to win a prize: half the money paid in may be used as the Prize Fund. The remainder goes to the charity.

The variants differ mainly in terms of scale. You must decide who will have the legal responsibility for ensuring the good conduct of the lottery. One major issue is collecting the regular contributions from members. You can get round this in two ways – by collecting subscriptions annually or quarterly, or by taking standing orders.

You have discretion over the division of the prize fund so you must decide whether one big prize is more appealing to your constituency than a number of smaller ones. If you are giving out prizes at meetings, two or three prizes might be better; if distribution is by post, one big prize might make your draw look more exciting when you publish the results in your newsletter!

Each member must be allocated a number or numbers. The draw must take place, before witnesses, in such a way as to ensure that it is random.

If you meet your members regularly, you can pay out in cash – always an encouragement to membership.

All lotteries operate under the supervision of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, except for the National Lottery, which is controlled by the Department of Finance. Some smaller lotteries are allowed: private lotteries (held by and for a club or society), occasional lotteries (with permits granted by the police), periodical lotteries (with licenses granted by the District Court) and lotteries held at certain events, such as

concerts. For more information see  
<http://www.doen.nl/static/ACLEU/pdf/CL%20in%20Ireland.pdf>

#### The Figures:

Collect €1200 per annum, pay out €600 and the charity keeps €600  
200 people pay €1 yields €2400 gross, €1200 net.

500 people pay €10 per month (10 numbers each) yields €60,000 gross, €30,000 net.

You may feel that a lower prize will be enough to sell your scheme. There is no lower limit to the amounts you can distribute! In the 500 Club example, you may feel that a prize of €1000 will suffice: this would increase the net yield to €48,000! At the lower end, a prize fund of €25 may be enough.

#### **Services**

Washing cars, packing shopping trolleys in supermarkets, sweeping or gardening, decorating... The list is potentially endless.

You could charge a fee for the service, or seek sponsorship for the length of time spent or number of services achieved. Or both!

Bag Packs tend to be lucrative, and great opportunity highlight a new project (ask permission to put leaflets in bags also).

#### **Sale of Work**

Do you know any people who are good with their hands? If so, would they come together to sell their own handicrafts, either as donations or on a 50/50 or commission basis?

Any hall, or indeed any large space (weather permitting!) can be used for this event.

Admission can be free, as long as you price the goods fairly. Remember, every item of craftwork cost so much in materials, and then took time to make. Offering a 5lb fruitcake for sale at €1.00 could constitute an insult to the cook!

Tea towels, aprons, eco friendly bags and mugs are great school fundraising ideas. Parents can buy their child's artwork on any of the items above. There are a number of websites based in the UK that allow you to send your artwork and they will deliver the finished products.

Children's art exhibitions are a great way to raise money as parents are usually delighted to be able to buy their child's art. There are companies that will frame and organize the exhibition for you within Ireland.

#### **White Collar Boxing Night**

Ask two local football teams, make sure they're rivals. Ask people with no previous boxing experience and give them several weeks training. Ask a local boxing trainer and his club to donate their time and club to help with the training. Choose a local venue that's not too expensive. 30 or so competitors. Two 2-minute rounds.

### **World Music Event**

First, find your venue! This can be large or small, but the venue is critical. Seating capacities and dancing capacities are not the same thing, so check with the venue before you price your tickets.

The musicians are the most important ingredients in the event. Get advice on bands, if you don't have them in mind. Think about refreshments.

### **Public Collections**

- Collecting in public can be a great way to raise money and profile, if it's done properly.

- It is essential to obtain the relevant permissions and permits.

An organised collecting event in a shopping centre or similar venue might afford the opportunity to use volunteer's energy and enthusiasm.

- Try to make your collection something special. An isolated volunteer with a collecting tin will get bored, cold and tired very quickly. Two people collecting together (or within "hailing distance") will keep each other going. Fancy dress, or a special attraction (music perhaps) will provide a focus, and draw the crowds.

- Make sure you have procedures in place to deal with the large volumes of coin you will have at the end of the day. Have help available to count the money, and put it in bags to take to the bank. You should have ready a supply of the correct bags for each type of coin, and it is wise to discuss with the bank how and when they would like to take delivery, especially if you expect to collect more than a couple of hundred euros!

### **Sponsored activities**

#### **Read**

The task must be quantifiable: number of books read, number of pages of a particularly difficult book, or perhaps (for young children) the time spent reading in silence!

#### **Swim**

Your local pool may be happy to participate, and they would then look after the safety requirements, but take care to ensure that enough lifeguards and helpers for tired swimmers are available. Sponsor by number of lengths or by time in the water, letting the less athletic into the honors.

#### **Run, walk, climb**

By distance, time or level of difficulty. As ever, great care must be taken with sponsored feats of endurance.

**Build**

If you have something which needs to be built, combine it with a fundraising event: sponsorship by the brick or board, by the foot, or by the length of time spent.

**Treasure Hunt**

A simple theme with lots of variations: a big course with maps to read, participation on foot or by bike: or a collection of everyday items to be stuck to a card with sticky tape.

**Paper chase, clean up**

Sponsorship by the volume of rubbish collected or by the time spent in an activity, which is in itself worthwhile.

**Sport Skills**

Penalties, Darts, Snooker and other marathon events. Any one of these could be sponsored in itself, but how about a multi-sports event? An objective standard needs to be set for each sport, and points awarded for achieving or getting close to that standard.

Sponsorship by the number of points or by the number of standards achieved. (Standards depend on ages, experience and local conditions).

**Parachute jump**

There are several centers where training and jump facilities can be arranged, with special rates for charity jumps: however, it is still quite expensive, and you need to be keen to do it.