



Friendship Ambassadors Foundation Guide to:

# Grassroots Fundraising

# Introduction

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Welcome to Friendship Ambassadors Foundation's Grassroots Fundraising Guide.

This guide is primarily intended for prospective Youth Assembly (YA) participants around the world, but is designed to be useful to other Friendship Ambassadors Foundation (FAF) programs as well. Most of the author's fundraising experience is within American communities, but many of the ideas in the guide may also be useful to international delegates and participants.

Several months ago, you likely heard about Youth Assembly from your friends, networks, community organizations, government, or by searching on the internet yourself for exciting opportunities for global youth dialogue. You were thrilled when you discovered that Youth Assembly was your chance for leadership training, friendship and network building, and instruction from leading voices in politics, economics, science, and social justice on the topic of the eight UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – all at United Nations Headquarters in New York City.

There was probably a moment, however, when you realized that the program wasn't free, even for the most impressive participants, like yourself. There was, perhaps, a sinking feeling in your stomach, and the thought, "It is impossible for me to go." Hopefully, that was when you found the link to FAF's Grassroots Fundraising Guide!

The central message of the guide is this: it IS possible to fundraise your way to Youth Assembly, and, in fact, it is critical that you do! This summer's Youth Assembly at the United Nations is designed to bring together a diverse group of passionate youth from around the world to discuss how the arts, culture, travel, and sports can unite youth in the UN Post-2015 Development Agenda.

YOU are a key piece of that diversity and a critical voice in that discussion. So, best of luck and happy grassroots FUNdraising!



# Why Grassroots Fundraising?

Grassroots Fundraising is a strategy for raising funds either for an individual or organization which achieves its financial goals through small donations from lots and lots of normal people. Grassroots fundraising is different from scholarships and grants because the latter usually relies on one central source of funding – a wealthy individual or foundation. Grassroots fundraising, by contrast, is a decentralized, community driven way to meet financial needs. This decentralization of funding often allows individuals and organizations more independence, creativity, and the ability to work on less traditional issues.

Good grassroots fundraising is undertaken with a genuine desire to empower your community and increase its investment and participation in the project, organization, or cause for which you are raising funds. It is also an educational opportunity – you get to share your passion with family, friends, and neighbors. When you grassroots fundraise, you still have deliverables (things you agree to do/produce for your donors in exchange for support), but instead of reporting back to a foundation on how you use their money, you must report back to your community, resulting in a cycle of mutual support and empowerment.

## Checking Your Attitude

Before beginning any type of planning or fundraising, we must check our attitudes. It's important to address our ideas and feelings about fundraising, particularly grassroots fundraising since it relies on community giving, because these ideas and feelings directly influence our motivation and therefore our effectiveness at achieving our goals.



# Checking Your Attitude Continued

Some of us are natural fundraisers, brimming with resolute confidence and being unfazed at declinations to donate. But many people are anxious about the idea of fundraising, often for reasons like these:

- 1) We're uncomfortable talking about money.
- 2) *People might say no, and that will be embarrassing.*
- 3) *We're nervous or shy.*
- 4) *It feels like begging; we don't want to impose on people.*

In order to be a confident and courageous fundraiser, it's important to address these fears and anxieties, and lay them to rest (which will likely be a process more than a one-stop shop). Below are responses to common anxieties (listed above) about fundraising.

1) **Keep some perspective : Attitudes about money vary from culture** to culture, but in many, conversations about money are taboo. Kim Klein, a professional fundraiser in the United States, explains that “our attitudes toward fundraising are a subset of our larger attitudes about money ... if you are anxious about asking for money or would rather not ask, this is normal. But ask yourself if what you believe in is bigger than what you are anxious about. Keep focused on your commitment to the cause and that will propel you past your doubts, fears, and anxieties.”

2) **People have the right to say 'No':** 'No' happens. Life teaches us there are all kinds of ways where "No" happens. Sometimes universities will tell us 'No', potential employers will tell us 'No', and potential donors will tell us 'No' too. We often say 'No' ourselves. The reason people decline to make a donation varies, but it is never something to take personally. Finances might be tight this month, someone might be having a difficult day, or maybe someone donated to a worthy cause just last week. Regardless, when someone declines to make a donation, is not a personal attack on you. As Klein writes, “If you don't hear 'No' several times a week, you aren't asking enough people!”



## Checking Your Attitude Continued

3) **Practice Confidence** : Fundraising will be a great way to prepare and build confidence for Youth Assembly! Start with potential funders with whom you feel most confident and comfortable and practice with them. Confidence is an invaluable skill both in your personal and professional life. Take this opportunity to practice it!

4) **Fundraising is an exchange** : Kim Klein explains that “begging is when you ask for something you do not deserve. If you are doing good work, then you deserve to raise the money to do it. What you must do is figure out how to articulate what you are doing so that the person hearing it, if they share your values, will want to exchange their money for your work. They will pay you to do work they cannot do alone.” Don’t think of our fundraising as an imposition; think of it as a proposition. You are proposing an exchange (support for service) that provides benefits to both you and your donor. It is your responsibility to make sure your donor understands the ways in which supporting your work positively impacts their life as well.

## Setting Your Goals

After addressing any qualms you may have about this fundraising endeavor, it will be important to assess what your need actually is and to take stock of what and where your potential funding sources are. This process includes clarifying to yourself what your expenses are, what they total, and by when you will need the money.

You have two general options for paying for the Summer Youth Assembly 2014. Your first option is to cover your food, lodging, and metro expenses through a conference package. You can find a description of Friendship Ambassadors Foundation’s different conference package options at:

<http://faf.org/unyouthassembly/packages.htm>



## Setting Your Goals Continued

It is not mandatory to cover your expenses through a conference package, but recommended as it ensures convenience, organization and reliability, particularly important features if this is your first time to the United States. One should note, however, that payment in full for any of these packages is due June 23, 2014.

Alternatively, you can find and pay for your food, lodging, and metro fares independently. This route may be the more feasible option if you cannot produce the necessary payment for a conference travel package. In this event, you will need to independently determine how much lodging, food, and inner-city travel will cost.

We recommend that you create a spreadsheet or table similar to the one below to track your progress, whatever route you decide to take.

Line item	Money Needed by	Amount Needed	Funding Sources	Estimated Contribution	Actual Contribution	Total Raised
Processing Fee	ASAP	95 USD	Personal	95 USD	95 USD	N/A
Basic Conference Package	June 23	763 USD	Mom & Dad	200 USD	200 USD	200 USD
			Other family members	50 USD	50 USD	250 USD
			Local Businesses	50 USD	50 USD	300 USD
Airfare			University	300 USD	300 USD	300 USD
			Lions, Rotary, etc.	200 USD	200 USD	500 USD
Personal expenses (taxis, phone card, etc.)	August 1	200 USD	Community service office, university, etc.	200 USD	200 USD	200 USD

Creating a chart like this one is an important reality check and will enable you to more effectively tailor an efficient fundraising plan. For example, this chart lets you see that you will need to purchase a conference package relatively soon, which is less expensive than airfare; thus, you might consider focusing on potential mid-level donors in the beginning, and save the high-dollar donors to help cover your airfare.



# Crafting Narrative

Once you have clarified what your need is and identified potential resources, you must get to the business of developing a strategy for effectively raising the necessary funds. The first step in this process is determining how you will frame your request for financial support to your different audiences (your different potential donors). This step can be immensely fun and rewarding and offers the opportunity for important self-reflection, creativity, and empowerment.

It is likely that you will have a unique narrative for each potential donor. All narratives will be true, but each will emphasize different messages. To be an effective fundraiser, it is critical that you communicate the following general messages to your donors:

## **1) Your passion for the Youth Assembly at the United Nations, the 8 UN Millennium Development Goals and the UN Post-2015 Development Agenda**

Consider your personal history and direction and try to answer the following questions. Why are you passionate about Youth Assembly? What key milestones, people, or places in your life are most responsible for making an opportunity like Youth Assembly so exciting to you? Why are you invested in achieving the Millennium Development Goals? Do you feel like you have a ‘calling’ and if so, what is it? What have been the obstacles to fulfilling this ‘calling’? What are your goals for the Post-2015 Development Agenda?

## **2) The relevance that YA and the Millennium Development Goals has to your potential donor**

This is your opportunity to connect your passion to your potential donor’s passion. To do this, explain all of the ways in which YA and the Millennium Development Goals speak to her/his interests. What are the person’s interests? A business owner will likely be interested in economic development. A teacher is invested in improving access to education. A mother might prioritize improving women’s rights for her daughters. Make sure that your proposition makes clear the reasons your potential donor is invested in seeing the achievement of the MDGs too!



# Crafting Narrative Continued

## **3) Impact of Your Youth Assembly Experience On Your Communities**

*How will you use Youth Assembly to give back to your community, specifically to your donor? This is perhaps the most important part of your narrative. You have explained why you are passionate about YA and the MDGs, you have explained their relevance to your potential donor, and now, you must describe the concrete ways in which experiences/networks/skills that you gain at Youth Assembly to positively impact your shared community or cause. You must communicate that by helping you attend Youth Assembly, s/he is helping her/himself. When framing your proposition, remember that it is your responsibility to explain the benefits of this exchange (support for service) that your donor will enjoy. You should enter your conversation with a number of specific ideas and ask your donor for input and feedback.*

*Often people/organizations are reluctant to donate to projects they perceive to be benefiting one only person. This includes personal trips. This makes it all the more important for you to emphasize how your attendance at Youth Assembly will have benefits back home.*

***Here are some ideas on how you can use Youth Assembly to give back to your community:***

- 1. Offer a community presentation on the Millennium Development Goals and ways people can help advance them.*
- 2. Schedule a Skype date with/write letters to school children while you are at Youth Assembly to talk to them about your experience and what you're learning.*
- 3. Join the International Youth Council and use the relationships you develop there to connect your community to others around the world.*
- 4. Update your Twitter and Facebook statuses to raise awareness and asks for inputs and ideas for the Post-2015 Development Agenda.*

*Think about these four elements of your narrative and list some responses to the different questions posed. Then, if possible, practice it with a friend and ask for feedback.*



# Sources of Funding

Family and friends are always a great place to begin. But there are likely many other potential sources of funding within your community as well:

## **University Funds:**

Many student groups (Student Activities Boards, Student Government Associations), alumni, and parents' organizations have funds available for students to use. You can also check with university departments and university administrators (the President, the Dean, etc.) to see if there is money available to donate. School-affiliated organizations often need receipts, so sometimes it's helpful to ask for money for a specific thing (e.g. airfare).

## **Local Businesses:**

This includes retail stores, restaurants, newspapers, etc. Many local businesses love to support causes led by young people. Be sure to emphasize the relevance of the Millennium Development Goals to your local business community.

## **Religious organizations:**

They also often jump at the opportunity to help out for good causes. Religious institutions tend to be good places to host fundraising events, since they often offer space for free and are well-networked in their communities.

## **Local civic organizations:**

Contact multicultural organizations in your area or with which you have a previous relationship. Sister Cities International and the United Nations Association are two good examples of such groups. They will also likely be able to connect you to other individuals and organizations interested in supporting your effort to attend Youth Assembly too.

## **Online Fundraisig Communities:**

Establish a fundraising campaign online using community and neighborhood-based fundraising Websites. An online fundraising account can be conveniently used to seek funding from extended families and friends from far away. It is also a great idea to utilize your social media outlets, such as Facebook and Twitter, to provide updates about your fundraising progress to those who are interested in helping.



# Tactics and Resources

You have set your goals, you have crafted your narrative, and you are now ready to start raising your funds! Asking is, after all, the most necessary and important part of this process! Millard Fuller, who founded Habitat for Humanity, a U.S. non-profit, says, “I have tried raising money by asking for it, and by not asking for it. I always got more by asking for it.”

A key question that remains is how you will present your proposition to different potential donors. There are a number of different options. Face-to-face conversations are generally the most effective, but you might also write letters or emails, make telephone calls, hold events, or make Facebook causes.

The chart on the next page describes three popular forms of ‘making the ask,’ their rates of success, and the best instances in which to use each of them.

When asking groups or individuals to contribute, regardless of the method, it is often helpful to provide a detailed budget to let them know how their money will be used. Sometimes it is even helpful to ask a potential donor to cover a particular line item instead of just giving you money. For example, you could say, “Uncle Patrick, I’m raising funds to attend Youth Assembly in New York City this August. Would you be able to sponsor three metro tickets/one meal/one day of the conference?” This is often helpful for people who aren’t able to give much but would like to contribute, because it emphasizes that all contributions, no matter what size, are important.



# Tactics and Resources Continued

## Excerpt from Grassroots Fundraising Strategy Chart

Adapted by Mimi Ho from "Choosing the Right Fundraising Strategy," by Kim Klein & Stephanie Roth

Strategy	percent of response	Best Use	Comments
<p><i>Personal face-to-face solicitation</i> Meet with a prospective donor by prearranged appointment &amp; ask for a contribution.</p> <p><i>Prospect has ABCs:</i> Ability to give size you're asking for Belief in your work Contact with the organization or person asking for money.</p>	<p>50% say yes</p> <p>Half will give less than the amount you asked for.</p>	<p>To upgrade donors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To bring in large gifts from qualified prospects</li> <li>• To raise large amounts of money quickly</li> </ul>	<p>Start with people you know, at whatever level is appropriate for them.</p>
<p><i>Personal phone call</i> Caller knows the prospect. Makes call &amp; asks for contribution over the phone.</p>	15-20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To upgrade donors, especially people at \$50-250 level to higher gift</li> <li>• Work with thoughtful donors who can't be visited easily</li> <li>• Raise large amounts of money quickly</li> </ul>	<p>If it is hard to get donors to agree to face-to-face meeting, might need to rely on phone.</p>
<p><i>Personal letter</i> Key difference from direct mail: there is a relationship between the person writing and the prospect.</p>	10-20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low-key way for board, staff, or volunteers to ask friends &amp; colleagues for gifts</li> <li>• To get donors known to people in the organization to renew gift</li> <li>• Sometimes useful for upgrading</li> </ul>	<p>Usually recommend more personal contact with donors either by phone or in a meeting after letter, but let-ter alone can also generate money.</p>

# Sample Letters

## *A Sample Fundraising Letter for Friends & Family*

Here is a sample letter to use for a personal friend or family member. But we don't recommend that you use this sample word-for-word! Fundraising letters are more sincere, and thus more successful, when they are personalized.

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Dear Jennifer,

Hello! I hope my letter finds you happy and healthy and that you are enjoying your summer holiday. ***Take this opportunity to provide an update on yourself and your family. For example,*** Our family is staying busy with our various jobs and summer program. I am finishing my semester and working hard to prepare for Youth Assembly (YA) 2014, an annual gathering of hundreds of young people from around the world who are working in their home communities to advance the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals. I'm writing to tell you a little about YA and to let you know that I could really use your help with making this opportunity a reality. YA will be a wonderful chance for me to connect with others in my generation to share ideas and strategies about how to go about eliminating poverty, improving rights and access for girls and women, securing environmental sustainability, among other pressing issues of our day. As you know, these issues are especially important to me as... ***Take this opportunity to remind your friend or family member of recent project you were part of that sought to advance one of the MDGs...*** I'm writing you to ask for help raising funds so that I can attend Youth Assembly, and bring the skills and relationships I develop while there back to our home.

I am passionate about Youth Assembly and the Millennium Development Goals because I see so many ways in which they are not only globally relevant, but also locally relevant. ***In this paragraph, discuss the local relevance of Youth Assembly and the MDGs and mention some of***



## Sample Letters Continued

*the ways that you plan to apply the experience for the benefit of your community once you return.* Youth Assembly is an opportunity for a diverse group of young people, each coming from a different perspective with different experiences, to address some of the most important issues facing humanity. I know that Youth Assembly will dramatically expand my ability to positively impact our world!

I have covered the application processing fee myself and have been accepted, ***Make sure to mention ways in which you have made personal investments (of time or money) to make YA a reality for yourself,*** but I still need to cover my airfare and conference package. Would you be willing to support my effort to attend Youth Assembly 2014 and apply the experience back home in Kentucky with a donation of \$20 or more? I understand that times are tight and would greatly appreciate whatever you can contribute to help me attend. You can donate by writing a check either to me or to the Friendship Ambassadors Foundation, the organization run-ning Youth Assembly.

Thank you so much for taking time to read this, Jennifer, and I hope you consider supporting me and Youth Assembly this upcoming August. Have a great summer and hope to see you soon!

Love,

Marcie



# Sample Letters Continued

*A Sample Letter to an Institution (school, business, non-governmental organization, etc.)*

You can use this sample text to get an idea of the difference between a personal and a professional fundraising letter.

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You will want to use the person's name, not "To Whom It May Concern."

Dear Ms. Rayer,

*Use the first person paragraph to establish your connection to this person and to the school. If you know this person personally, give some information to remind him/her who you are. If not, introduce yourself. Be friendly!*

Hello! My name is Marcie Smith and I'm a recent graduate of Transylvania University. We met last year through Career Services. Thank you so much for your advice and direction – it has really helped guide me through my first year out of college!

*Use the second paragraph to explain Youth Assembly: why you feel it's necessary for you to go, how it is relevant to you, what you hope to gain out of it, etc.*

I have recently been presented with an exciting opportunity, Youth Assembly 2014 (YA), an annual gathering of hundreds of young people from around the world who are working in their home communities to advance the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals. YA will be a wonderful chance for me to connect with others in my generation to share ideas and strategies about how to go about eliminating



## Sample Letters Continued

poverty, improving rights and access for girls and women, securing environmental sustainability, among other pressing issues of our day. These issues are especially important to me; over the past several years, I have done significant campaign work on campus with our chapter of Amnesty International and the Women's Circle. Currently, I'm organizing a number of fundraisers in my community to support grassroots clean-up efforts in the Gulf.

***Use the next paragraph to make a clear ask to this person for financial assistance or for any other relevant assistance. Make this ask boldly and up front. You can follow up by explaining why you need some support.***

This is where I need your help. In order to attend Youth Assembly, I must raise \$XX by DATE to cover my airfare/lodging/food. You can find a more detailed budget attached. I have already invested much time and money into the process and I'm now looking for funding partners to help me get the rest of the way there. Could the Career Services Office provide all or part of this amount?

***Use this part to explain why supporting you to go here is a good idea for them. Whether or not they get a tangible benefit out of sending you there and having you come back with all these skills to ready to set up your local program, they might also enjoy some of the feel good aspects of supporting your cause. Does helping students get these kinds of opportunities connect with their values in some way?***

I hoped the Career Services Office might have funds available for student leadership development, and that it would be interested in supporting me in my effort. I know that the skills and relationships I will develop at Youth Assembly will greatly expand my ability to effect innovative change on this



## Sample Letters Continued

campus and in my community. I see it as an opportunity to link my local efforts to advance the Millennium Development Goals with broader, global efforts. Please consider supporting me in my effort to attend Youth Assembly!

***Use this part to explain how they can go about helping you. Give them information about how to send money to you, or ask them to get in touch with you to arrange this part.***

If you are interested in donating, or can help us get to this gathering in any way, please email me and I will be happy to work out the details.

***Use this part as a closing, being sure to thank the reader(s) for their time.***

After I return from Youth Assembly, I hope to continue to build on this relationship between my work and yours. Would you like to meet to discuss our ideas and share some of yours? I would love to hear your feedback!

Thank you very much for your time, and I hope to hear back from you soon!

Sincerely,  
Marcie Smith

***If your letter has gotten lengthy, it might be a great idea to offer a “P.S.” one-sentence recap of what you need from them and by when or some other small tidbit of information.***



# Donations & Other Details

Many donors will want to know if their donation is tax-deductible. Laws and regulations governing tax-deductibility will vary from country to country, so you will need to investigate this on your own. If it is possible, you should create a separate bank account into which you can deposit your donations, for both transparency and organization.

Expressing gratitude is a critical step in the fundraising process. A short thank you note is often the best way to do this. Kim Klein recommends the practice of “Thank Before You Bank” – write and send your thank you note before depositing the donation – as a way to ensure that expressing gratitude doesn’t slip your mind.

## ***What do I do if I don’t raise enough money?***

Sometimes after doing an assessment of financial need, it is clear that the potential funding sources at your disposal are not sufficient to cover your costs. First, consider possible ways to cut or eliminate different costs. It might be necessary to reevaluate your plans, either giving yourself more time to fundraise (aiming to attend Youth Assembly 2015) or considering a different program.

## ***What do I do if I raise too much money?***

You have not dreamed big enough! You may be better at this than you think! There may be more support for your participation in Youth Assembly than you thought! If you find yourself with extra funding, you could use it to extend your work with the YA: take the longer accommodations package including the weekend networking and volunteer time after the YA. You may use part of the excess funds to expand one or two report-back sessions when you return, bringing all of your donors together to remind them that your Youth Assembly experience was a community, as well as individual, achievement. Another option is to put the money back into your community, by donating it to a local organization that is doing valuable work on the ground to advance the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).



# Additional Resources

Power Shift 09 Fundraising Resources: <http://www.powershift09.org/organizers/fundraise>

Spread the Word: Share this free guide with your friends!  
<http://www.faf.org/main/youth-assembly-at-the-un/resources/fundraising-guide/>

## About Us:

Friendship Ambassadors Foundation, Inc. is a nonprofit, tax exempt, 501(c)3 organization that provides meaningful, cultural exchange opportunities promoting peace through cultural exchange. Using the arts for peace, dance, music, choral (choir), and other performing and academic groups receive real interaction during their travels, both on the performance tours and special projects like our annual Youth Assembly at the United Nations, reconciliation and relief programs, and other special group travel opportunities. The arts-based healing programme Finding New Hope, United Nations related travel, and fiscal agency services assisting emerging nonprofit travel and peace organizations that share FAF's goals augment the main bulk of our work: nonprofit, customized group travel, concert tours and cultural exchange worldwide. FAF's music, dance, and choral (choir) tours can also be used as fund development tools for groups we serve. FAF does not charge a fee for such services and a portion of each tour is fully tax deductible as allowed by law to each participant or their family. Friendship Ambassadors Foundation believes that cultural exchange is an excellent way for Americans to learn more about the rest of the world: culture in general and dance, music – both choral and instrumental – and other art forms in particular transcend language barriers and enable true interaction to take place among those involved. Thus they promote peace and global cooperation through mutual understanding, and are essential for the education of youth – the leaders of the future. Furthermore, they can become valuable fund development and sustainable resource tools for the groups we serve on both ends of all exchanges, concert tours, youth assemblies, and other travel and interactive programming worldwide.

## Apply to the YA and Visit our Website at:

[apply4ya@faf.org](mailto:apply4ya@faf.org) & [friendlyam@faf.org](mailto:friendlyam@faf.org)

Text by FAF Staff and Volunteers - [friendlyam@faf.org](mailto:friendlyam@faf.org)

Graphics by Jenn Hales - [PatinaCollaborative.com](http://PatinaCollaborative.com)

