



Fundraising vs. Support Raising

You might hear the term “fundraising” for your trip. Fundraising is simply asking someone for money; support raising is asking a donor to join you in a mission endeavor. We encourage you to coach your trip participants to take the support enlistment approach:

- Ask others for the opportunity to explain the call that God has put in your heart to share the gospel with people who do not know Jesus as their Savior.
- Invite them to join you in taking the gospel to the nations by actively praying for you and/or helping provide for the financial needs of this mission experience.

The support approach requires more effort on your part, such as providing prayer updates, reports, and follow-up when you return, but it will be more fruitful for both you and those supporting you.

Seek the benefits of support raising

As you raise support for your trip, remember that this is a great opportunity to:

- **Share the vision of your trip.** Others need to know what you are doing and why. The mission of God is worthy of our participation, and more importantly, it is a matter of obedience to Christ’s command.
- **Learn what it means to be sent.** God calls the church to send out the workers he raises up for the harvest (Acts 13:2). The church should have a stake in what you will be doing. You are representatives of your local church as well as ambassadors for Christ.
- **Pray!** This is no small undertaking to raise this much support. Don’t forget to ask God to help you. This is a great time to grow in your dependence and faith in Him.
- **Develop interdependence among believers.** The church is the body of Christ, and members need to learn how to support one another and experience the sacrificial giving and joyful receiving God’s people are called to exhibit.
- **Practice stewardship.** To join in the mission of God is to elevate it as a priority over other things in our lives. It involves a sacrifice of time, money, and energy, and represents the best investment of ourselves and others.

Challenges to consider

- Don't let finances minimize spiritual preparation. A constant focus on raising money may drain time, energy, and effort from the important task of preparing spiritually, learning cross-cultural skills and people group-specific information, and building unity within the team.
- Beware of causing "donor fatigue." It is easy to ask for help from the same people and groups every time, but it can lead to diminishing results. Also, donors can come to resent those who request funds but make little or no sacrifice of their own.
- Don't let pride become a stumbling block either in your "success" or in the humility of asking for help. Similarly, discouragement from lack of support can lead some to withdraw from the trip. Seek the support of your local community to encourage you as you trust God for His provision.
- Remember security! As you raise support, remember to ask your field team what you can and cannot say online or on social media.

Practical Ideas

Here are a few best practices to help you as you begin your journey of raising support.

- Start early in planning the trip and enlisting participants. There is no substitute for ample time to raise funds for your mission project. Start as soon as possible to connect with potential supporters.
- Begin close to home. Before asking for support from anyone else, ask yourself what you will sacrificially give to your own support. You cannot ask others to sacrifice financially if you are not willing to do the same. Consider what you can alter in your lifestyle that would provide money for the mission project. Here are a few ideas
 - Give up eating out or coffee and put that money towards the trip.
 - Give up movies or other outings and put the money towards the trip.
 - Give up money usually spent on new clothes.
 - Ask for mission trip support instead of birthday gifts.
 - Look for ways to earn funds inside jobs and one-time assignments. Neighbors may be willing to hire you to do yardwork, house cleaning, and pet-sitting, especially if they know you will use the money in service to others.
- Ask your church or campus ministry if they are able to help support you. Many churches are very willing to give to students involved in missions. Talk with your pastor – don't surprise him or your church leaders by going to others first. There are several avenues a church may provide to directly support you and your group.

- Send out support letters. Plenty of examples are available on the internet, but a personal, customized note is always preferable. Be sure to get permission from church leadership before sending out letters to church members. Make the letter informative about the purpose of your trip, your motivation for going, and your own investment. Provide a way for donors to submit funds using your funding link in Go Method.
- Fundraise with events. If your church or ministry permits it, consider hosting one or more of these events:
 - Chili cook-off – Ask people to bring homemade chili to a fellowship for competition. Ask attendees to pay for their meal with a donation.
 - Spaghetti or pancake meals – Enlist friends from your college ministry or small group to help prepare and serve the meals. Sell these after church or a convenient time when people can come pick them up.
 - BBQ sale – Enlist a volunteer team to prepare and smoke the meat. Pre-sell by the pound at catering prices.
 - Bake sale – Enlist volunteers from your church or family to bake a variety of things and sell them at church or even online via social media.
 - An auction for missions – You can auction off donated items, bake sale sweets, or skilled services (such as landscaping, haircuts, interior decorating) to be donated by church members and the community. Enlist an auctioneer to make things exciting and fun or conduct a silent auction.
 - 5k walk/race – A race is a popular event. With an entry fee and a course, you can have an event for families and the community.
 - Car wash – An oldie but goodie.
 - Work projects – Spread the word that you are available for various work projects like yard work, house cleaning, pet sitting, etc.

There are many ways to help your group as they raise support for the trip. What other ideas have you seen other groups use for raising support?