

Team Leader Training

Support Raising



**FOOD FOR
THE HUNGRY**

Fund Raising. Many team leaders cringe at the very mention of the word. As if recruiting, training, and mobilizing a group to travel hundreds - if not thousands- of miles to serve is not daunting enough, the challenge of raising funds to cover all the associated expenses can be close to paralyzing.

Before our brains start humming with thoughts of writing support letters or doing bake sales, let's take a step back. In fact, take a pen and cross out the words "Fund Raising" that appear at the very beginning of this discussion. In its place write "Support Raising." While this little exercise in and of itself may not allay all our concerns about getting the funds to cover this trip, hopefully, it will serve as a first step in viewing the process not as a necessary evil, but as a unique opportunity.

What is the difference between fundraising and support-raising?

Many people tend to think of these two things synonymously. In reality, they are distinct in both purpose and function. The function of fundraising is simply to raise enough money to cover the cost of your trip. Fundraising activities can include things such as garage sales, car washes, dessert auctions, and other similar fun ideas. In most cases, an exchange is made. A meal is provided, a service is rendered, and a trinket is sold. There is value in fundraising.

In fact, for team members who have an entrepreneurial spirit or an affinity towards marketing, fundraising can allow them to unleash their creative sides. Support-raising, on the other hand, is putting together a team of people who will partner with you in realizing the vision that God placed in your heart. It involves asking people to come along and partner in the journey.

There is a time and place for fundraising, but a Team Leader should be looking for opportunities to help their team members raise supporters, rather than simply raise funds. The truth is that most of us will naturally gravitate towards fundraising rather support raising. By looking at some examples, we can see that a "fundraising" focus could cause us to miss out on some incredible opportunities afforded in the support-raising process.

Short-term Team Roles

To help frame the discussion, let's look at three distinct roles people associated with your trip might fall into. In the MISTM model (Maximum Impact Short-term Missions) designed by Roger Peterson and Wayne Sneed, these roles are defined as the "Goer", the "Sender", and the "Host Receiver".

- **Goers** are those who serve on the team.
- **Senders** help mobilize the Goers. This help can come in the form of finances or prayer or encouragement. This group can include family members, church members, and even organizations like Food for the Hungry

- **Host Receivers** are in-country people who will serve alongside the team. This group can include missionaries, national church leaders, and in-country staff of organizations such as Food for the Hungry.

As mentioned earlier, fundraising has value and serves a purpose. The Sender participates in it because they want to contribute financially to the trip, and this intention pleases God. However, be aware of the potential pitfalls in fundraising. One possible pitfall is it could reduce the Sender's role to that of a financial transaction. For example, if a team holds a car wash and their goal is merely to raise funds, then the team has minimized the role of the Sender. Once the Sender has paid their \$20, and their car has been washed, their participation is complete. In a typical bake sale, the Sender's involvement may be seen as no more than a purchaser of an overpriced plate of brownies.

Usually, the Sender does not participate in a car wash or purchase a plate of brownies because there is an inherent value for them in the transaction. On the contrary, often the Sender pays much more than what they would be charged at a local car wash or at a nearby bakery.

Because the Sender's role in a typical fundraising activity is often reduced to that of a financial transaction, the Sender can miss the opportunity to experience a life-changing involvement. Also, the Goer can miss the chance to draw the Sender deeper into the process through prayer. In Philippians 4, Paul talks about how the gifts and prayers of the believers are credited to their account. We know that Paul is not talking about "credit" as a way to earn salvation. Rather, he calls gifts and prayers a "fragrant offering" to God. So by giving and praying, the Sender's involvement is deepened, and they experience the inherent blessings that result from giving to mission work.

We can see in Scripture that God values both the Goer and the Sender. In Luke chapter 8, we see that the ministry of Jesus and His disciples was financially supported by some of the women who had been touched by His teachings and became His followers. Likewise, Paul's relationship with the church in Philippi also speaks volumes about the important roles of Goers and Senders. In Philippians 1, Paul thanks the church for their "partnership in the gospel." As we have seen in chapter 4, this partnership was evident in their prayers and financial contributions. Paul was the "Goer," and he considered the "Senders" in the church of Philippians partners in the work God was doing through him.

As Team Leaders, we have the privilege to help the Sender take the next level and become a partner in support raising. This requires more effort from us, and we often hesitate because it forces us to deal with our pride. It is a humbling thing to come to someone and ask them for money. Most of us are wired towards self-sufficiency, and we strongly dislike the idea of anyone seeing us as "needy." However, support raising is one of the means through which we can recognize our own "poverty." In our relationship with God, we all have "poverty." In other words, we are all "needy." We can discuss our "poverty" at length without ever having to bring finances into the

equation. The truth is everything that we can offer within the context of the short-term team experience will fall short. Even if we combine all of the team members' collective talents and abilities, we will still fall short. We need God.

As Team Leaders, perhaps the greatest encouragement we can give our team members as they go through the support raising process is that God is able. He is able to go before us, He is able to give us good success, and He is able to complete the work that He has started in us. And even when others on the team have sufficient financial resources to take care of their trip and may not need additional financial support, their involvement in the support raising process can deepen their understanding of the importance of the prayers and encouragement of others.

Let us keep in mind that as Team Leaders we have an incredible opportunity to influence the way Senders think about support raising. We can help them realize that support raising is an invitation to partner in the work of God. Once we acknowledge the value and opportunity that support raising brings, we will no longer settle with a mediocre fundraising idea. But does it mean that the traditional car wash or bake sale is wrong? Absolutely not! These types of activities can be great pre-field team builders (In fact, an appendix to this document contains suggestions on how activities and ideas can be used for support raising).

What's important is that we make an effort to broaden the meaning and scope of any fundraising activity we pursue by turning it into a support raising activity. How can we make sure the activities are truly support-raisers? In a typical fundraising activity, once the Sender has paid their \$20 for the car wash or their \$10 for the plate of brownies, they're involvement is finished. In most cases, we've not challenged the Sender to continue their involvement through prayer. We can help correct this by handing out a prayer card to every person who participates in the activity. You can also ask them to sign-up on an e-mail list to receive prayer and praise updates from the team. It's amazing how something as simple as an information card or regular e-mail updates can transition the Sender's involvement from fundraising to support raising.

Remember that any activity has the potential to be an effective support raising activity if you look for ways to pull the Sender into the team experience beyond just the simple investment of finances. Ask for something more. Ask them to stay engaged through prayer. Keep them excited about your trip by visualizing it for them. Without a doubt, the most widely used means of raising support is the traditional support letter. With that in mind, here are a few practical suggestions with which you can equip your team members (these suggestions are included in the team member handout).

Support Letters

Any writer or writing instructor will agree that one of the most important parts of writing is knowing your audience. How should team members decide whom to send their letter to? Encourage team members to start the process by listing as many people as they

can think of. If you want, you can even make it a competition by giving team members 5 minutes to list as many people as they can. Once the list is finished, have team members utilize this list as a spring board to begin the process of prayerfully considering whom they should send letters to. Remind team members that they are not asking for money. Rather, they are giving supporters the opportunity to partner in the work of the gospel.

As team members begin the process of writing letters, remind them that not all of the letter recipients will have the same degree of familiarity with some of the Christian “jargon” that can often creep into these types of letters. Encourage team members to find words that will clearly articulate how God is moving in their hearts rather than words or expressions that will confuse their readers.

Encourage team members to incorporate these helpful guidelines:

1) The letter should be visually appealing.

Make sure the letter is typed and properly formatted. If possible, try to include some photos of the place you will be visiting. Try to keep the letter limited in length. Ideally the letter should be no more than one page. People are busy. The longer the letter, the lesser the chance the receiver will actually read it.

2) The letter should be personal.

You’re sending these letters to people that you know and have relationship with. Don’t let the letter sound like a generic form letter. Write a letter that is warm, friendly and compelling. Let your passion shine through the letter so they can see why you are moved to participate.

3) Be informative.

Let the reader know:

- Where you’re going
- When you’re going
- What you’re doing
- Specific financial needs and deadlines

4) Be clear and specific on steps by which they can respond.

- Who is the check made payable to?
- Who do they send it to?

5) Get the letter proofread for grammar and readability.

A good outline is as follows:

- Salutation:
- Paragraph #1 – Greeting and setting
 - Give people an update on your life and some of the things God has been doing in your life that has brought you to the place where you are now participating in this trip.

- Paragraph #2 & 3 – Explanation of trip & ministry
 - Tell people where and when you’re going as well as what you’ll be doing. Try to paint a picture of the place you’ll be serving and the ministry in which you’ll be engaging.
- Paragraph #4 – Explanation of need, directions
 - Let people know clearly and specifically how they can support you (How much money is needed? How can they pray?). Be sure to clearly outline how they can respond (“use the enclosed envelope to send a check made payable to...”)
- Paragraph #5 – Wrap-up
 - Thank them for their involvement in your life and this opportunity.

If you’re asking Senders to mail a check, it’s also a good idea to ask team members to include a self-addressed stamped envelope with every letter that they send out. With so many people paying bills online, many people don’t always have convenient access to a stamp.

As team members send out letters, remind them that they are raising support, not funds. It’s possible that many people may not be able to financially participate in sending; however, God can and will honor their prayers. Remind team members that just because they don’t receive money from supporters, it does not mean that they are not loved or supported.

During these early stages, it is also good to begin stressing to team members the importance of thanking their supporters.

For many team participants, this trip will not be the only short-term team for which they will be raising support during their lifetime. The best way to help the support raising process for your next trip is to make sure you do a good job of following up and reporting back to your senders this time.

As you receive support (financial or a commitment to prayer) from Senders, be sure to send them a quick note thanking them for their participation. Once you return, be sure to send a follow-up letter clearly stating:

- 1) The activities your team was involved in (as a reminder)
- 2) The ways you saw God move.
- 3) The things God taught you through the experience.
- 4) Your appreciation for their involvement.

While the support raising process is not easy, it is not without opportunity. First and foremost, the support raising process allows us the opportunity to be reminded that ultimately we are dependent upon God for the team trip to be a success. Second, the support raising process opens the door for us to better understand the importance of the Sender’s role and the inherent blessing in sending.

If as team leaders we can help our team members better understand these ideas, then we have the unique opportunity to change the way they will view the support raising process. Rather than simply being a necessary evil that precedes the “real ministry”, the actual process of support raising will also provide exciting opportunities for ministry.

Suggested Outline for Support Raising Training Session

1. Introductions

Start the session off by quickly introducing yourself and asking team members to take turns introducing themselves.

2. Biblical framework for support-raising

Take a look at some of the scriptures listed in this document and share them with team members. Challenge team members with the idea that their supporters are truly partners in the work of the gospel. The support raising process is not simply about getting money. The support raising process is much larger and much more important than finances alone.

3. Brief trip description

Team members will want to include some general information about the trip in their support letters.

It is also good to refer team members to the Food for the Hungry website at www.FH.org. On the website, team members will be able to get information on the Food for the Hungry organization as well as some general information on the country where they will serve. This information will be helpful to team members as they write their support letters.

4. Basics of support letter writing

Review the ideas contained in this document. As team members write their own letters, it may be helpful to utilize some of the sample support letters listed at www.FH.org/teamtraining.

5. Brainstorm potential support-raising activities

Team based support-raising activities can be a great way to lay foundations for teamwork. Spend some time discussing potential activities the team could work together on to raise support. Keep team members focused on the idea that raising funds is not enough. They need to find ways to draw potential supporters in through prayer, etc. Feel free to utilize the appendix in this document as a starting point, but recognize that your team may be able to come up with some very creative ideas.

6. Remind team members of deadlines

As mentioned earlier, support-raising represents a huge opportunity to draw people in to the work your team will be doing; however, there may be some

team members who are so swept up in the prospect of going on a short-term team that they are either not focused on support raising or underestimating the amount of work involved.

Providing deadlines for the team (such as a due date for support letters to be in the mail, or a due date for trip expenses, etc) may be helpful for some team members to keep them focused.



Appendix: Support Raising Ideas

Here's a list of support raising ideas for you to consider with your team. Regardless of what activities might be chosen, remember the goal is to raise support and not just raise funds. In other words, be sure to pull people into the process beyond just financially supporting the trip. Ask them to pray and provide them with resources that make it easier for them to get fully engaged.

Coupons for Missions:

Ask friends, family, & church members to donate the money that they save at the grocery store by using coupons for a week or two.

Host a Meal or Dessert:

Have team members help prepare and host a meal. The team can sell tickets or accept a donation from those attending. During the meal, have team members talk about the ministry in which they will be participating. Pancake breakfasts or ice cream socials are always big hits; however, feel free to shake things up a bit also. Try to offer cuisine typical of the country in which your team will be serving.

Skip a "Pleasure":

Have team members encourage family and friends to forgo some of the pleasures they might ordinarily enjoy (gourmet coffee, going to a movie, dinner at a favorite restaurant) for a week or two and donate the savings towards the trip.

Restaurant Partnership:

Some restaurants will donate a portion of a meal's price towards a group or church. By promoting the event within your church and with family and friends, the restaurant is hoping to see an increase in business by those looking to support your trip.

Rummage Sale:

Have friends, family, and church members donate items to be sold in a rummage sale. Even supporters who may not be able to give cash towards your trip, will typically have a closet filled with a few things they'd like to get rid of.

Online Auction:

Some items may fetch a higher price when sold via an online auction rather than via a traditional rummage sale.

Bake Sale:

The traditional bake sale is still a popular choice. Ask supporters to donate items which can then be sold with proceeds going towards the trip.

Auction:

Have friends, family, and even local merchants donate items or\ services which can be auctioned off. Meals at restaurants or free yard work are always popular.

Car Wash:

The traditional car wash is also a popular choice and can be a good team builder. Prior to the carwash, encourage team members to get donations from sponsors who will pledge a certain dollar amount for every car washed.

Corporate Philanthropic Match:

As you connect with supporters, see if some of them have corporate match programs through their employers. Please be aware that every corporate plan has different rules, policies, etc that will determine things such as the timing of when funds are made available (some programs only do annual payouts) or if they will support the team at all (some programs do not give towards faith based organizations).

Night Out:

Organize an evening, where parents can drop their children off at the church while they head out for a date. Team members can babysit the kids and perhaps even try out some of their VBS lessons.