



I need to find funding

It's one thing to have the vision to work in schools, but another to be able to find the funding to do it. Christian organisations regularly struggle to get the income they need to pay for staff and all the other costs involved. In this guide, we explore the different options available for churches, organisations and individuals who want to find funding to work in education.

▶ Starting points

It's important to realise that the kind of work being done in schools will impact the different sources of funding available.

Few grant-making trusts in the UK, for example, will fund explicitly Christian work that seeks to present faith in assemblies or RE lessons. For projects concentrating on this kind of work, other sources of income will need to be found. However, working pastorally with children and young people or providing anger management programmes may make finding grants a more likely possibility.

It can be tempting to find yourself adapting and changing your project to fit a grant and ending up well financed but doing something you realise you don't really want to do. Keep your project aims in mind as you seek funding and make sure you hold true to your vision and objectives.

▶ Five questions to ask yourself first

1. Where do you get your money from at present? Divide up your income into different segments and calculate the percentage each makes up of the total.
2. How has that changed? Do the same for the last three years and track what's changed. Do you know why?
3. What kind of risks are attached to where you get your income? If you get more than 20% from a single source, then you need to recognise the risk attached... losing that income could impact your viability?
4. What work are you doing in schools? List the types of work you do (curriculum input, pastoral care etc) and allocate a percentage to each to represent how much time is given to it.
5. What areas would you like to work in? If you had unlimited funds, what would be the first three things you'd do?

Use your answers to these questions to shape your plans for finding funding, whether that's increasing the

amount you receive from a current source or finding new funding from scratch.

► Sources of income: Donations from individuals and churches

Donations, often from local Christians, are the most common way a schools project is funded. They're important not only because of the income they provide, but because they strengthen and develop support for the project and connections with churches. As a result, many projects work hard to encourage this kind of giving.

✦ **Regular giving** through standing order or direct debit which is often monthly but which can also be quarterly (every three months) or annually.

This is a vital source of funding because it gives the security of known income and allows projects to budget more accurately. Donations can be set up as a standing order or direct debit and are often monthly, although any period can be chosen.

Although donations from local Christians (and others) are important, there is a limit to how far they can cover the costs of funding a schools project. For example, a project with two schools workers might have expenditure of around £60,000 (£30,000 per worker is a good general guide to cover salary and other staff and running costs). Most regular donations tend to be around £10 per month. At that rate, a project would need to have 500 donors signed up to meet their costs! Although this doesn't include tax relief and the fact that some donors may give more, it does show that individual donations alone are unlikely to meet the full costs of running a project.

➤ What is the difference between standing orders and direct debits?

With standing orders, you are giving your bank or building society an instruction to pay a certain individual/institution's bank account a set sum at regular intervals - usually monthly, but also weekly, quarterly or annually. The sum cannot change unless you cancel the existing instruction and set up a new one. It generally takes around three working days for the money to arrive in the recipient's bank account and the process is usually free, though some banks may charge.

A direct debit is an authorisation from a customer to allow a particular institution to collect sums from his/her bank account, provided that institution gives advance notice of the collection times and amounts. In most cases the date and the sum will be regular and unchanging - such as with regular direct debits to utility companies or credit card providers. However amounts can also be varied when required: increasing amounts in line with inflation, for example. Payment by direct debit is also instant - there is no waiting period while payment is verified by the bank. It is basically the equivalent of paying by debit card.

Setting up a standing order is much easier for smaller projects as there will be no cost involved and it's simply a matter of producing your own form (with certain essential information included) which donors send to their banks.

Direct debits usually involve a fee payable to the company that handles and administers them as well as setting up your bank account to receive them. This can be anywhere between 30p and 70p per debit plus a monthly administration fee to the company. On the positive side, most people are much more familiar with direct debits than standing orders, and they can even be paperless and set up via your web site.

Some companies operate as a 'middle man' in this process, where donors give regularly to them by direct debit and the company then passes on the donation (minus a handling charge) to the organisation who then don't have to set themselves up to receive direct debits. Stewardship Services is an example of a Christian company operating in this field.

❖ **One off gifts** that have come as a result of a special event or service or a fundraising campaign.

Projects can receive individual donations from collections in services or special fundraising events. For example, a project may hold an Annual Service, inviting local supporters to come together to give thanks for what they are doing and hear about plans for the future. During this kind of event a collection or appeal can be made.

Other projects have run special fundraising events like dinners or golfing days. It's worth remembering that these bigger events are often costly to stage and it's often difficult to produce significant income. For example, a dinner at a local hotel might cost £20 per person. If those attending are asked to pay themselves, numbers attending may be smaller. If the project pays the costs and invites, say, 50 people to come for free, there is a cost of £1,000 to be met. This can impact the amount raised from any collection or appeal.

❖ **Sponsorship** of a particular event, like a residential weekend for young people.

Some schools projects invite donors to contribute to a specific event rather than give generally to the project. This can be helpful in enabling donors to feel that their gift is making a difference and develop a stronger connection with the project.

For example, one schools project runs a summer camp each year for the young people it meets in schools. It asks local Christians to help subsidise it so that costs can be kept to a minimum and to completely cover the costs for some of the young people from low income families. About three months before the camp, they produce a special leaflet explaining what the camp is trying to achieve and asking for people to consider supporting. In return, they provide the first name of a young person attending the camp and ask the donor to pray for them. After the camp has finished, they produce a report explaining what was achieved. This kind of sponsorship has proved very popular and raises enough money to enable over 10% of young people on the camp to pay only a nominal amount whilst keeping costs for the others very low.

Another schools project asks local Christians to help fund special weeks of activities in schools. For example, a project invited a drama company to work with them for a week or special activities in a local school.

❖ **Church donations**

It's very common for schools projects to be supported by local churches who give from their budget towards the work. Ideally churches should commit to this over a period of years to enable projects to budget and plan, but of course, this isn't always possible.

One of the keys to increasing and developing this source of income is keeping in close contact with the church and church leaders. Ask them to come with you into school for a morning to see what you do! Aim to meet church leaders regularly and take a service at least once a year. Developing these links are crucial if you want to sustain their support.

❖ **Five actions to increase donations**

1. Set up giving online on your website using Paypal or directly with your bank (there's a fee and some technical work needed for the latter).

2. Ask people to give. Sounds obvious, but if you don't ask people, the chances are they won't do anything. Start by making sure everyone in every church gets a letter every year asking if they'd be prepared to help.

3. Use Gift Aid for one off collections as well as regular giving. Everyone who pays tax can 'gift aid' their donation increasing it's value to you by up to 28% and it's not limited to regular giving. Have a simple form

for people to sign and put in the collection with their donation.

4. Report back on what you're doing. Use regular newsletters to tell the stories of what you're doing and share them widely. Paper is better than email for this because very few people bother to read a newsletter they've been emailed.

5. When people sign up to give regularly, include a box they can tick which promises to increase their giving annually by the rate of inflation.

📌 Sources of income: Grants

There are thousands of grant-making Trusts in the UK, giving anywhere from a few hundred pounds to many millions to different projects and good causes. Can Christian schools work access some of these funds?

The answer is a qualified 'yes'. Certainly some projects have had considerable success in doing so, but don't expect it to be a easy process. Finding funding through grants requires a huge amount of research and work and, of course, it may not even pay off with a successful result.

The first challenge is matching a grant-making Trust to your project, or an aspect of your project. Is there a Trust somewhere who will want to fund what you do? How do you start looking? Here are a few options:

➤ **Do the 'leg work'.** Various guides publish lists of Trusts and the kind of work they fund. You can search through these and find those that cover your kind of work. The catch? Apart from the time it takes, many of the directories and databases (and often the most thorough) are subscription based so there's a cost. If you search your networks and contacts, you may be fortunate to find someone who already subscribes to one as part of their job and they may be able to provide information for you free of charge.

➤ **Hire a professional fundraiser.** Often the most successful approach, because you are not only hiring their knowledge of trusts but also, in many cases, their personal connections. ("I applied to that Trust last year for another charity and I know the Director... I'll give him a call and talk to him about you and what you're doing..."). Previously many fundraisers worked for commission, taking a percentage of the funds raised. This is much less common today. Expect to pay around £300-500 a day for the services of an established fundraiser. A funding programme might typically involve two to three days a month for six months... so costs could reach anywhere between £3,600 and £9,000. However, if it results in £100,000 income you may consider it money well spent!

➤ **Use your own contacts.** Almost everyone knows someone linked to a grant making trust, but few remember or recognise the link. Interview your staff, management team and other supporters to see which trusts you might be able to approach using a personal contact. As an example, here are five real people who said they had no links with any kind of trust or grant programme:

➤ The Management Committee member who worked for Vauxhall/General Motors and remembered that the company ran an annual grant scheme which employees could nominate a local organisation for up to £10,000.

➤ The supporter whose sister worked for The Body Shop which ran a special fund for which employees could nominate local charities for up to £5,000.

➤ The Management Committee member who ran a hotel business which had strong links with the County High Sheriff, who was Patron of three Family based trusts making grants in the local area who made grants over four years of over £40,000.

➤ The staff member who knew a Bishop through family connections (Many Bishops are Trustees on numerous Trusts) who wrote a letter supporting a subsequent successful application.

➤ The church minister who had trained many years before at a College that also had a small grant making Trust.

❏ **Get advice from other organisations.** You can pick up all kinds of support and advice to help you with applying for grants. For example, some Local Authorities run services to support voluntary organisations providing regular emails about grants available. There are also various local and national organisations (often charities themselves) who can provide advice and even training in applying for grants. The National Council for Voluntary Organisations is a UK wide example who can also direct you to any local resources.

❏ **Five actions to successfully apply for grants**

This Guide isn't intended to provide a detailed walkthrough of making an application to a grant-making trust. However, there are some basic 'rules' which can increase your chances of success.

1. Trusts tend to want to fund something new rather than existing work, no matter how successful. That's frustrating but unfortunately hard to overcome. If you aren't seeking to fund a completely new piece of work, think about how you could pitch your proposal in terms of developing and growing what you're doing. For example, existing work providing anger management groups in a couple of schools could be expanded to a proposal for a full time worker to take on this work in many more schools.

2. Make sure you have all the necessary supporting documents to accompany an application. You'll almost certainly need your most recent accounts, information about your structure and legal status (Memorandum of Articles, for example) and a safeguarding policy. Also search out someone who can be a good reference for your applications. Is there a teacher in a school who would be happy to recommend your work enthusiastically? Most applications will ask for a reference like this, so have someone lined up ready.

3. Ask for something clear: like the salary and costs of a worker. Trusts find this much easier to understand than complicated proposals that, for example, ask for funding for various workers who are each giving a certain number of hours towards a project.

4. Applications are formal, but let your passion shine through. Trusts read hundreds of applications every week and, like most of us, they prefer people with enthusiasm and vision. Make sure your application communicates this with gusto!

5. Wherever possible try and make personal contact with a Trust (not all will be willing, but it's worth a try). Some Trusts will talk to you over the phone about an idea for an application. You can get valuable information on what they're looking for through this kind of contact. Other Trusts will even look at draft proposals before they're formally submitted. Ideally, if you can, you should make personal contact with a Trustee. It may be possible to meet them and discuss your plans before submitting an application. This can make a huge difference when it comes to the Trustee meeting when your application is being considered.

▶ **Sources of income: Contracts**

Local Authorities increasingly look to the voluntary and private sectors to help deliver some of the services they provide. They do this by offering contracts for tender and, although the process can be intimidating for smaller voluntary organisations, it is possible for Christian schools work projects to successfully bid and win these kinds of contracts.

The current financial climate and cut backs will, of course, change the context drastically with Local Authorities having to reduce their budgets for the foreseeable future. However, that does not mean that the opportunity for contracts has disappeared altogether.

The biggest challenge for schools projects is finding the kinds of contracts that are relevant to the work they are doing. Local Authorities are often focused on the need to deliver hard outcomes like, for example, a reduction in exclusions, an increase in GCSE attainment or numbers of over 16's in training or employment. Many schools projects are involved in soft outcomes, that is to say, helping young people develop emotionally or socially, providing pastoral support or simply 'being there' in a time of crisis. Although these soft outcomes do indirectly impact the kinds of changes Local Authorities need, it's a difficult link to prove and projects that are more directly linked to hard outcomes are more likely to be successful.

Local Authorities often have mailing lists which they use to publicise tendering opportunities, so it's worth getting in touch to make sure your organisation is included. Some also use a 'pre-tendering' process where you submit basic paperwork and information (safeguarding, accounts etc). If you successfully complete this, it enables you to be eligible for commissioning opportunities.

In the new political climate of 2010, it's increasingly possible that schools themselves will be given funding directly to commission work. This may, as it turns out, make the process easier for smaller organisations that are already known to the school.

✕ **Five actions to successfully tender for contracts**

1. Be ready. Tenders are often publicised with very tight deadlines of a matter of days or weeks. You will need all your paperwork ready in advance to make the most of these tight deadlines.

2. Work in partnerships. Tenders from organisations working in partnership are often viewed more favourably and can be much stronger in content. Is there a partnership you could develop with, for example, a private tuition centre for excluded students. They provide the literacy and numeracy teaching, you provide the pastoral care?

3. Develop a clear rationale for your Christian basis. Are you willing, for example, to employ not-yet-Christians as part of your work? What issues would you have with the Council's equal opportunities policy? Explore these areas in advance and decide if your organisation is prepared to make some of the compromises that might be necessary to work so closely with a Local Authority.

4. Talk to your Local Authority about pre-qualifying for tenders and if you can go through this process. Different departments of the Council will have different policies so make sure you include all the possible ones who might fund the kind of work you do.

5. Don't follow the money for the sake of it. It's tempting to change your work to fit in with a contract opportunity but it's more important to stick with the vision and aims you have set in place.

▶ **Sources of income: Charging for services**

The idea of charging schools for your work will feel strange to many schools workers. Historically, most Christian schools work has been paid for by churches and individual donations. There's good reason for this: it allows projects greater freedom in deciding what they do and links the work more directly with local churches. Schools work has also been seen as mission or evangelism where again the idea of charging would seem very strange.

At the same time, there's sometimes an insecurity about what Christian schools work offers to schools, and the fear that, if there was a charge attached, schools would not want it.

However, it's worth remembering that Christian schools work contributes a huge amount to schools, in all kinds of key areas. The work is valuable and there can't be many schools workers who haven't thought at some point, having arrived at a school to find a booked assembly or lesson has been cancelled, that

charging might at least challenge schools to value this input more highly.

As a result, over the last few years, some schools projects have begun charging for some or all of their services. The different models and approaches include:

‣ **Charging for some services.** Particular services are charged to the school, whilst the remainder of the work is given for free. For example, assemblies, RE and extra-curriculum activities are all done at no cost, but anger management programmes or a special one-off RE day have a cost.

‣ **Suggested donation.** Projects make clear to schools the overall cost of the work they are doing and ask schools for a donation towards it. The work will continue whether or not the school makes a contribution. Sometimes it can help to lay out how the overall cost is being met. For example: "It costs £10,000 to place a worker part time in the school. The local churches contribute £6,000, but we are asking if the school could make a contribution towards the remaining £4,000."

‣ **Cancellation fee.** Projects offer their work for free, but make a charge if a booking is cancelled at short notice. For example, £40 for a lesson or assembly. These charges are agreed with the school in writing in advance.

▶ **Sources of income: Training**

Many schools projects do not fully realise the depth of knowledge and expertise they possess. In fact, they may be sitting on a valuable source of income. Have you ever thought of offering training to schools and other Local Authority teams on some of the areas in which you work?

For example:

- youth culture and trends
- young people and spirituality
- anger management
- supporting young people through crisis

Some schools projects have found that their own (and neighbouring) Local Authorities have valued highly this kind of input into their training programme. Fees for a day's training might range from £250-£700. If a project only did one of these a month, they might develop a significant new source of income.

One of the benefits of this approach is that, although the initial set up of a training course is labour intensive, once it is put together it can be used over and over again.

▶ **Conclusion**

There will hardly be a Christian schools project in the country that doesn't struggle for funding, at least some of the time. It's a huge challenge to find the income you need. But it's not impossible. Developing lots of different sources of income is a much healthier and more secure option, so you can survive if a particular source dries up. And, of course, don't forget prayer! Whilst this is a practical guide, we're not forgetting that God is our provider and that our first action should be to pray and ask for His help. That's the most solid foundation to finding funding!

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