



BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER. **FUNDRAISING EVENT IDEAS**

**Twenty tried-and-tested event ideas for
Local Mission Partners – plus how to make
every event financially successful**

START WITH YOUR AUDIENCE, NOT YOUR EVENT

One of the biggest mistakes organisations make is starting with an event idea rather than the people they want to attract. Before deciding on a quiz night, golf day or sponsored walk, ask yourself:

Who are we trying to engage?

What would they genuinely enjoy?

What could they realistically afford?

What would encourage them to invite others?

A great fundraising event isn't just one that raises money but it also builds relationships, introduces new supporters to your work, and encourages people to come back again. Planning around your audience rather than your favourite event idea will almost always lead to greater success.

MAKING YOUR EVENT FINANCIALLY SUCCESSFUL

Many events only raise money through ticket sales, but the most successful fundraising events create several opportunities for people to give. Think about:

Ticket sales

Sponsorship

Raffles or auctions

Refreshment sales

Merchandise

Donation points (cash and contactless)

Games or competitions

Gift envelopes or QR code donations

Regular giving sign-up opportunities

When setting ticket prices, consider your audience carefully. A lower-priced ticket may encourage more people to attend, while a premium option (for example, VIP seating or a hosted table) can significantly increase income without increasing costs. Offering individual tickets alongside table packages can also encourage businesses, churches and groups of friends to attend together.

REMEMBER

Don't let the relationship end when people leave. Thank everyone afterwards, share the impact of the event, and invite them to stay connected through regular giving, volunteering or future events.



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EVENT IDEAS THAT WORK

Why each one works – and a top tip to make it fly.

1 Quiz Night

Why it works: Low cost, easy to organise and appeals to a wide range of ages.

Top tips: Sell refreshments, hold a raffle during the interval, offer bonus rounds sponsored by local businesses, and encourage teams to purchase extra answer sheets or "lifelines."

2 Coffee Morning or Afternoon Tea

Why it works: Ideal for churches and local communities. Easy for volunteers to run.

Top tips: Ask for donations rather than charging for refreshments, sell homemade cakes, include a small fundraising talk, and provide opportunities for regular giving.

3 Sponsored Walk, Run or Cycle

Why it works: Participants raise sponsorship from friends and family, multiplying income beyond the event itself.

Top tips: Create different distance options, encourage online fundraising pages, provide branded T-shirts, and invite local businesses to sponsor refreshments or medals.

4 Community Fun Day

Why it works: Raises awareness as well as income and attracts families who may be new to your project.

Top tips: Charge modest stall fees, sell refreshments, include games with small entry fees, run a raffle and invite local businesses to sponsor activities.

5 Charity Dinner

Why it works: Suitable for supporters able to give at a higher level and creates opportunities to share your vision.

Top tips: Offer individual tickets and hosted tables, include an auction or pledge moment, invite an inspiring speaker, and encourage follow-up meetings with interested guests.

6 Concert or Music Evening

Why it works: Appeals to churches and local communities and creates an enjoyable shared experience.

Top tips: Sell refreshments during the interval, offer programmes or merchandise, invite donations alongside ticket sales, and encourage local choirs or musicians to perform.

7 Golf Day

Why it works: Particularly attractive to businesses and major supporters while raising significant income.

Top tips: Sell team sponsorships, hole sponsorships, nearest-the-pin competitions and auction prizes donated by local businesses.

8 Sponsored Challenge

Examples include sleep outs, mountain climbs, marathons or endurance challenges.

Why it works: Participants become your fundraisers by seeking sponsorship from their own networks.

Top tips: Provide fundraising packs, celebrate progress on social media, offer branded clothing and invite participants to share why they're taking part.

9 Church Gift Day or Mission Sunday

Why it works: Strengthens relationships with churches while sharing the impact of your ministry.

Top tips: Provide videos, stories and prayer points, invite regular giving, and encourage churches to consider making your project part of their annual mission budget.

10 Auction or Promise Evening

Supporters donate skills, services or experiences rather than simply physical items. Examples include gardening, photography, meals, holidays, handyman services or music lessons.

Why it works: Creates an engaging evening with very little financial outlay.

Top tips: Ask local businesses to donate prizes, combine it with refreshments or a meal, include online bidding where possible, and collect contact details for future communication.

11 Around the World Supper

Invite guests to sample food from different countries, with each course hosted by different volunteers or church groups.

Why it works: Creates a memorable evening while celebrating culture and community.

Top tips: Sell tickets, invite local restaurants to sponsor ingredients, and include a short presentation about your work between courses.

12 Secret Supper

Guests buy a ticket without knowing where the meal will be held until a day or two beforehand. Local hosts open their homes for small groups before everyone gathers for dessert together.

Why it works: Creates intrigue and encourages conversation.

Top tips: Ask hosts to donate the meal, keeping costs low while maximising income.

13 Reverse Raffle

Instead of the last ticket winning, the last ticket remaining loses and everyone else wins a small prize.

Why it works: It's different, memorable and creates excitement throughout the evening.

Top tips: Combine with a social event or quiz night.

14 Skills Auction

Rather than auctioning objects, auction people's talents. Examples include DIY, photography, gardening, cake baking, music lessons, babysitting, decorating or car washing.

Why it works: Costs very little and showcases the gifts within your community.

Top tips: Encourage businesses to donate professional services too.

15 Community Challenge Month

Rather than one event, invite supporters to choose their own challenge during a month: walk 100 miles, give up coffee, read 20 books, climb every local hill, swim every week.

Why it works: Appeals to different ages and interests.

Top tips: Share progress weekly on social media to keep momentum going.

16 £20 Challenge

Give individuals or teams £20 and challenge them to turn it into as much money as possible within a month.

Why it works: Encourages creativity and healthy competition.

Top tips: Hold a celebration evening where everyone shares what they did.

17 Empty Room Challenge

Invite local businesses, churches or schools to transform an empty room into a pop-up café, escape room, art gallery or Christmas shop for one weekend.

Why it works: Generates publicity as well as income.

Top tips: Involve volunteers with different skills and encourage local media coverage.

18 Dinner with a Difference

Instead of charging for a meal, guests receive a simple meal and hear powerful stories of impact before being invited to make a donation.

Why it works: Keeps the focus on your mission rather than the meal itself.

Top tips: Include an impact story and a clear invitation to become a regular supporter.

19 Local Legends Evening

Invite well-known local personalities, sportspeople, business leaders or community figures for an interview-style evening.

Why it works: Attracts audiences beyond your existing supporters.

Top tips: Offer premium tickets with a meet-and-greet or reserved seating.

20 Community Treasure Hunt

Create a walking treasure hunt around your town using clues linked to local landmarks.

Why it works: Great for families and schools while introducing people to your community.

Top tips: Charge team entry, sell refreshments at the finish, and invite local businesses to sponsor clue locations.

TURN EVERY EVENT INTO A FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITY

Whatever event you organise, ask yourself:

- Could a local business sponsor part of it?
- Could guests bring a friend who hasn't heard of your project?
- Could you recruit regular donors?
- Could you collect impact stories and photos for future fundraising?
- Could you invite volunteers to get involved?
- Could you identify potential major donors?
- Could you strengthen relationships with local churches?

The most successful fundraising events don't just raise money—they grow your network of supporters. Every event should leave you with new relationships as well as new income.

FINAL THOUGHT

The best fundraising events do more than raise money as they build relationships. Every attendee is a potential future donor, volunteer, church partner, trustee or advocate for your work. As you plan your event, think beyond the income on the day and ask, "How can this event help people become long-term partners in our mission?" Often, that long-term relationship will be worth far more than the event itself.