

**Grassroots Fundraising Works and We Can Prove It**

European Community Organizing Network

University of Arkansas Clinton School of Public Service

Drew Coker

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This report is the result of a long-term collaboration between the University of Arkansas Clinton School of Public Service (CSPS) and the European Community Organizing

Network (ECON). This relationship has culminated in this report on the status of grassroots fundraising within ECON member organizations and possible routes forward for grassroots fundraising initiatives. This report includes key advice from experienced stakeholders as well as best practices that can help organizations that are new to grassroots fundraising, or those who have experience, find better ways to perform grassroots fundraising and create real outcomes for their communities.

The University of Arkansas Clinton School of Public Service is the first graduate school in the nation to offer a Master of Public Service (MPS) degree. As part of the school's unique curriculum, students must complete hands-on public service projects, including local work in Arkansas communities and international projects across the world.

ECON is a network of civil society organizations that exists to better serve these organizations and assist them in functioning in the most efficient and effective way. ECON manages three main important functions: training and mentorship, building strategic alignment, and raising money. This report will enable ECON to fulfill all of these goals for their member organizations.

This report was completed by Drew Coker, an MPS student from the University of Arkansas Clinton School of Public Service, with contributing advisors Chuck Hirt and Ildikó Bárányi, both of whom are ECON Fundraising Committee members and distinguished professionals in community organizing within Slovakia and Hungary respectively. Joan Flanagan and Dave Beckwith also provided valuable insights and constructive mentorship, both of whom have decades of experience in grassroots fundraising and organizing.

## Executive Summary

*Grassroots Fundraising Works and We Can Prove It* is the result of an interview process with 25 different community organizers, fundraisers, and community leaders across Central and Eastern Europe. This report is meant to showcase the grassroots fundraising work being done by European Community Organizing Network (ECON) member organizations and assist these organizations in future grassroots fundraising operations. The key lessons from these reports came from the interview participants and the author's own takeaways from the interview and research processes. The most important parts, and which will be expounded upon in the later report, are that grassroots fundraising: makes budgetary sense, has proven to be successful in the Central and Eastern European context, and will continue to be successful due to growing cultural acceptance and expanded efforts of civil society organizations.

From ECON's perspective, these experiences in grassroots fundraising show that its member organizations are serious, responsive and effective in their communities, and able to take on new strategies when presented with the opportunity. A key factor in this context is the regranting undertaken by the ECON Fundraising Committee through the ECON Small Grants program. This initial funding provided organizations the ability to act on the creative ideas they came up with, gave ECON the ability to further provide support and assistance to its organizations, and provided the initial inspiration for this report. Further investments in this regranting initiative will continue to pay dividends for member organizations and the network as a whole. Donors, foundations, and other grantmakers should pay attention to this success and assist ECON in expanding this initiative. These organizations have the drive and creativity to match initial funding amounts and have sustainable visions for the future of organizing in Europe, high investments have to match the high possible yield of action.

Throughout the creation of this report, there has been an explicit theme of community, either development, engagement, or improvement. This shows a clear mutually beneficial link between the ECON member organizations and their respective communities. For ECON, helping its organizations be more responsive and produce the best possible results for their communities is central to its broader mission. Building power from the bottom up and activating people's own ambitions for change is pivotal for grassroots fundraising just as it is in community organizing.

Below is a word cloud made from interview participants' response to the question: What is your first image or thought in your head when you hear the phrase "Grassroots Fundraising"? Key terms from this word cloud include: people, community, together, common, contribution, change, campaign, material, support, and resources. Look for these themes moving forward in the report.



## Introduction

Grassroots fundraising means different things to different people. From a purely American perspective, there is a specific connotation associating grassroots fundraising with political campaigns and electoral politics. However, this is not the only realm in which grassroots fundraising can be successful. Grassroots fundraising can play a significant role in any nonprofit civic, community organizing, or civil society-centered organization. Specifically, within the unique context of Central and Eastern Europe, community-based action is one of the most effective strategies for countering the rise of totalitarian governments or political systems and improving the quality of life of all people. Grassroots fundraising is not just a conceptual idea or a platitude, but rather it is a complete rethinking, restructuring, and reprioritization of funding mechanisms and strategies of an organization. Joan Flanagan, author of the international bestseller *The Grass Roots Fundraising Book*, calls grassroots fundraising “the most dependable, renewable, and democratic way to raise money for your group.”<sup>[1]</sup> Grassroots fundraising is any form of fundraising where the participation and funds are drawn from a community that would benefit from the action. These grassroots fundraising actions are typically done on a smaller, interpersonal scale, but with the rise of crowdfunding and other internet-based action, there are many opportunities for large-scale, nation-wide or worldwide grassroots fundraising. Since these types of organizations have public service and community engagement as their central focus, incorporating grassroots fundraising strategies into their funding streams is quite easy. One participant in the research project expressed not just a need but a responsibility for these organizations to incorporate grassroots fundraising strategies saying “it is very difficult to say one is community organizing without grassroots fundraising.” This report will focus on how ECON member organizations can better incorporate these strategies into their funding streams and what has been done already as a way of providing guidance and inspiration to the entire network.

Along with this report, attached in Appendix 1 is the full storybook with the included finances. Appendix 2 and 3 are a collection of materials, resources, guidebooks, worksheets, and templates that will help groups better incorporate grassroots fundraising into their fundraising strategies. Appendix 2 will include practical templates that groups can print off and automatically use to improve their fundraising strategies. Appendix 3 offers more general guidebooks and resources on grassroots fundraising, crowdfunding, and peer-2-peer fundraising. Appendix 4 is a list of the questions used in the interviews.

## Why is Grassroots Fundraising Relevant?

Grassroots fundraising offers organizations so much more than a consistent source of money. Grassroots fundraising provides a community the opportunity to take ownership of the action conducted. Ownership of an issue means that a community becomes personally invested, either emotionally, financially, or with their own time in the execution or results of an action. Building ownership is the root of organizing. With grassroots fundraising, the organizer or leader asks their participant to personally take on the action financially, by creating a clear link between the money donated and then the action made possible. When someone feels ownership of an issue, they become intertwined with how the action plays out. This leads to better engagement and engagement on a deeper level. Organizers find building ownership to be so important because of the chaotic nature of the modern world. With many different distractions pulling people's attention in all different directions, creating ownership ensures that a volunteer or member will give greater focus and attention to the community action at hand.

Grassroots fundraising, while time and labor intensive, can offer organizations a higher level of freedom of action. Grants or government funding arrangements are surefire ways for organizations to reach the end of each fiscal year, but many of them come with specific tag lines or requirements that restrict action into certain topic areas or methods. Grassroots fundraising, by directly sourcing funding from a community, gives organizations the chance to a) hear about local issues or problems directly from the community and b) work in the ways the community wants to solve such problems. Grants, while they are consistent and will generally allow for high levels of work and engagement in an issue area, can restrict organizations to action areas that a community may not necessarily need or want. By sourcing a large portion of funding from the community, the organization then becomes more responsive to the community. If an organization receives a large portion of funding from the community in terms of community events, membership drives, crowdfunding campaigns, or donor engagement events, the organization then will act in a more democratic, responsive, and participatory manner. Whether this comes from the pure, democratic virtues that the leaders believe in or not doesn't matter, because the leaders will not want to risk losing that large portion of funding.

At the end of the day, grassroots fundraising makes dollar sense. Across Central and Eastern Europe, many individuals in the research process expressed that their communities would generally be open to grassroots fundraising initiatives, meaning that there exists a treasure trove of untapped donors who have not given simply because they have not been asked. If organizations took on these grassroots fundraising

initiatives in their communities, they could unlock a whole new level of engagement and participation that they have not seen before. While there are real concerns about the cost (financial and time-related) to do grassroots fundraising well, incorporating these grassroots fundraising recommendations into an organization can produce real, measurable results. Along with the financial sense that grassroots fundraising makes, there is an idea of multiple bottom lines or multiple metrics of success from grassroots fundraising initiatives or actions. Grassroots fundraising improves an organization's ability to act, organizational strength and creates stronger outreach for community engagement and community involvement in actions. Even if an action doesn't produce exact financial success, there are still improvements being made. Conceptualizing this idea of multiple bottom lines is key for understanding the value of the stories later in this report.

## The Central and Eastern European Context

Central and Eastern Europe is a diverse region made up of several distinct countries and cultures stretching from the Baltic Sea in the north to the Adriatic in the west and on to the Black Sea to the east. This cultural diversity creates a multitude of problems as well as opportunities for future organizing efforts. Most notably, this region has been marred by a long recent period of totalitarian rule from the former Soviet Union. This period of totalitarian control has had many effects on the region in terms of culture, economics, and lifestyles. Most notably in this context, people have reservations about being classified as a "member" of an organization or having a formal relationship with a politically active organization (a topic that will be explored later in this report regarding donor lists and maintaining organizational records).



Photo 2: Central and Eastern Europe, europeetravel.com

Recently, however, many of these countries have enjoyed a 20-30 year period of sustained democratization and an economic transition towards a market-based economy. Along with this period of democratization, this region has experienced a gradual improvement in quality of life and happiness since the 1990s, creating a region ripe for grassroots fundraising and community organizing.

While there are positive trends in Central and Eastern Europe, there are also some worrying signs that there could be a “backslide” back into totalitarian control. These signs can be seen in multiple countries at varying stages of progression. For example, the rise of the right-wing Hungarian Fidesz party and Prime Minister Viktor Orban, the Alternative for Germany party in Germany, and the Law and Justice party in Poland, shows that totalitarianism and anti-democratic trends are alive and well in the region. These trends are worrisome but they also give room for growth and opportunity in the civil society and non-profit sector.

For ECON member organizations, there are distinct differences between the scope, scale, issue areas, and finances of the different organizations. Even within countries’ borders organizations can vary greatly. Some organizations are direct-action, grassroots groups doing the work on the ground while some function more as community organizing facilitators and trainers and serve in more of a support role to other organizations. The financial realities of grassroots fundraising are quite different within these different organizations. These smaller, direct-action organizations could benefit more greatly from incorporating in or improving their grassroots fundraising

strategies, but this is not to say that larger, more nation-wide organizations couldn't also benefit from the recommendations in this report.

Grassroots fundraising in the Central and Eastern European context has had a complicated history over the last 30 years. While some past efforts have been made and American fundraising experts like Joan Flanagan and Dave Beckwith have held workshops and training sessions on this topic, there has still been quite strong resistance to pursuing these grassroots methods. Resistance from these efforts have primarily come from groups being unfamiliar with tactics and goals. Some organizers have also mentioned that some volunteers and fundraising members feel uncomfortable asking others for money because of cultural values and beliefs towards money.

In 1999, Joan Flanagan led one of the first grassroots fundraising workshops in the region for a group of Slovakian organizers. People came from all over the country to receive this training and after a bit of instruction, Flanagan felt that the organizers weren't buying in very well to the idea. Flanagan then tasked the group to organize themselves into two person partnerships and go door-knocking in a high-rise apartment building to prove to the organizers that these methods work. The partnerships were given two hours and tasked with raising money for a children's day neighborhood event. After the two hours were up, the group came back together and were shocked to find just how effective directly asking people is. Over 70% of apartments that were asked ended up giving to the organizers and 1200 EUR was raised. Since then, the group led this door-knocking initiative for five more years afterwards and within the first two attempts were able to double their initial amount raised. The group found that honest appeals for a now well-known children's day event was effective in raising money directly and that advertising a specific day for collection leading up to the day made it so people were at home and prepared with their donations.

This story shows that while some organizers may think that grassroots fundraising is difficult or doesn't raise money within the Central and Eastern European context, these methods have been effective and their communities have been responsive for much longer than they have thought. The only people who don't give are those who haven't been asked and this example shows this perfectly. Going out and meeting people where they are at creates effective, sustainable, and long-term fundraising.

Over the past five years, ECON has made it a priority to promote these kinds of strategies to member organizations. Along with this, many groups have independently decided to pursue these strategies, creating the beginning of a possible paradigm shift away from relying solely on grants and moving towards larger portions of grassroots fundraising in groups' budgets. This storybook is meant to tell the story of this paradigm

shift and provide a reference point for other organizers and fundraisers moving forward. This report is a product of ECON's shift in promoting more sustainable and participatory fundraising and the indications are clear that things could be changing for the better across Central and Eastern Europe. As these things change, organizers and fundraisers who are promoting grassroots fundraising will find their jobs to be even easier and more financially productive.

## Methodology

The data collection for this report came from video conference interviews completed over the course of two months with ECON member organization professionals and organizers that have direct experience with grassroots fundraising initiatives. The interviews were generally completed within one hour and were focused on determining two main points: what that organization has done in terms of grassroots fundraising initiatives and what that person would recommend other organizations do when approaching grassroots fundraising. Specific interview questions can be found in the appendix. These questions were developed in collaboration between all report authors and were designed to produce a thorough conversation on grassroots fundraising activity within ECON member organizations. Notable themes throughout the conversations were: organizational capacity, event management, budgetary management, donation sourcing breakdowns, non-profit operation, and creative fundraising strategies.

Selection of interview participants was completed primarily by Chuck Hirt and Ildikó Bárányi as well as members of the ECON community who had connections within their respective countries or organizational networks. The main criteria for participants were those who either had direct experience with grassroots fundraising (e.g. running events, managing long-term fundraising strategy, directly participating in grassroots fundraising strategies) and those who oversee organizations where creative grassroots fundraising has occurred. Both groups of participants contributed greatly to the final report as they offered different specialities and provided relevant advice and key examples for future organizational operation. The majority of participants were either experienced on-the-ground organizers within their communities or high-level operational staff or directors of organizations that had taken part in grassroots fundraising strategic planning. By incorporating the views and opinions of those who are actively doing the work on the frontlines, the report authors hoped to create a tangibly productive report for ECON member organizations. Including these voices gives other ECON member organizations experienced accounts of specific productive examples from which they can replicate and learn.

Along with this, many interview participants participated in the ECON Small Grants Program, a regranting initiative where participants were given a 200 USD (180 EUR at the time) initial amount and tasked with doing some kind of grassroots fundraising event or initiative with that money. The funding for the 200 USD per group came from the ECON 2018 Annual Campaign and 11 groups received funds in total. Overall, the initiative was a great success as it produced not only the great stories that are listed below but also helped instigate a greater willingness to use grassroots fundraising strategies in an organization's everyday work. Now that participating organizations have had a productive experience with grassroots fundraising strategies, they are a) more prepared to manage this type of fundraising, b) more likely to continue doing grassroots fundraising as it has been proven to make dollar sense for them, and c) know how receptive their community is to grassroots fundraising. For the regranting process, ECON knew that member organizations had great ideas and great plans made for fundraising, but were either risk averse or didn't have the capital to start a new initiative. This regranting project gave ECON member organizations the opportunity to act with almost no risk involved and create a creative, locally sourced event or initiative. Along with this, participating organizers said that the groups were able to hold more thoughtful and constructive events because they didn't have to worry about the initial logistics of finding enough money for a venue space or the minutiae of costs that go along with event planning.

ECON has been prioritizing fundraising to a greater degree over the past five years with several initiatives including creating the ECON Fundraising Committee, expanding donor outreach, targeting larger donors, developing the ECON Small Loans Program and an annual fundraising campaign, expanding the mentorship program meant to help groups fundraise. Dave Beckwith first challenged ECON to take on these initiatives as he believed that ECON could do so much more in its fundraising efforts. Along with these fundraising efforts, ECON member organizations have taken it upon themselves on several occasions to manage creative fundraising campaigns and events.

The next section will include these stories of grassroots fundraising and regranting. Each story has its own unique value and taking in the experience of other organizations will help groups avoid any potential pitfalls while also providing them best practices and guidance for their own initiatives and campaigns.

## Grassroots Fundraising On the Ground

Grassroots fundraising can come in such a diverse variety of forms that it would be almost impossible to fully capture what it looks like on the ground in Central and Eastern Europe. However, this section will show several great examples of a community and organization coming together to raise money. Grassroots fundraising has limitless potential, it can really be anything. An important thing to think about in this section is how each organization was able to utilize something unique about their organization or community to best fundraise. Finding that key unique point about an organization can be quite easy, as one simply has to answer three questions: why do we do what we are doing, why should our community care about what we are doing, and what can we do to make the community involved in what we are doing? Look for the answers to these questions in the following examples. This section will give a brief summary of action with the full stories in Appendix 1.

### Guerilla Urban Beach - Trees at Romai - Budapest, Hungary

[Trees at Romai](#) utilized values of community-centered fundraising, public recreation, and environmental conservation to work to preserve a piece of land along the Danube River as a public beach for public use.

### Current Event Discussion Groups - Freie Ungarische Botschaft - Berlin, Germany

[FUB](#), A group of expatriate Hungarians living in Germany hosted discussion groups based on the current events in Hungary and were able to raise money and awareness amongst the Hungarian expat community and local Germans.

### Neighborhood Day - The Center for Community Organization (CKO) - Banska Bystrica, Slovakia

A local citizens group working with the support of [CKO](#) were able to institute a widely successful community event for several years utilizing local business connections, creative fundraising techniques, and leveraging the network of individual members and volunteers.

## Community Center and Creative Parties - Serbia on the Move - Belgrade, Serbia

Working groups of [Serbia on the Move](#) led a revitalization of a local community center using in-kind donations and community-centered fundraising in eastern Serbia, while the education working group led creative fundraisers that were able to make tangible change in their community while preserving the autonomy, independence, and respect of the communities they serve.

## Newspaper Public Meetings - Together for Debrecen - Debrecen, Hungary

[Together for Debrecen](#) utilized a peer-to-peer fundraising model at the onset of their free, independent newspaper, and now employ a subscriber model with face-to-face meetings between the public and the editors and journalists to maintain that sense of independence, fair judgement, and equity across their platform.

## Community-Centered Fundraisers – CRAION – Cahul, Moldova

[CRAION](#)-sponsored working groups around Moldova appealed to Moldovan traditions, utilized creative fundraising strategies, and worked from within the community to raise real money and make real change.

## Crowdfunding and Apartment Developments - Floreasca Civica - Budapest, Hungary

[Floreasca Civica](#) managed two highly-successful crowdfunding campaigns and the skills of their local community to attempt to stop the development of high-rise apartment buildings on local green space through the legal apparatus of Hungary.

## Protest Party - The City is for All Pécs - Pécs, Hungary

A homeless rights advocacy group, [The City is for All Pécs](#), developed protest parties at a local pub to spread awareness, raise money, and assist the homeless community of Pécs in preserving their rights.

## Flea Market - Lively Gyál - Gyál, Hungary

Lively Gyál, a local community advocacy and civic engagement group in a suburb of Budapest put on a flea market to sell unwanted items and engage with the local community on a popular day at the local market.

## Combating Poverty with Literature - Dignified Living Working Group- Budapest, Hungary

Utilizing a popular issue theme and connections with local artists and authors, a poverty rights advocacy group, [the Dignified Living Working Group](#), combined art and advocacy to make a successful night for the low-income community in Budapest.

## Murder Mystery Night - Together Creating Communities (TCC) - Wrexham, United Kingdom

[TCC](#) leveraged connections with local businesses, the network of members, and a Victorian-style mansion to put on a murder mystery night for their community, raising mass funds and creating a memorable event for their members and the broader community.

## Building a Narrative - Radautiul Civic - Rădăuți, Romania

A local civic engagement and advocacy group, [Radautiul Civic](#), in northern Romania built narratives and utilized creative storytelling and “ask” strategies to create results for their community, specifically within the context of the COVID-19 crisis.

## Zumba - Together for Nógrád County - Salgótarján, Hungary

Timi Bogdanne, a local community organizer for Together for Nograd County, used her passion for Zumba, a dance workout class, to create community consciousness, mobilize her population in northern Hungary, and raise awareness and funds for community-centered action and initiatives.

## General Trends in Grassroots Fundraising

A common comment among interview participants is that any sort of grassroots fundraising would not have even been possible twenty years ago. Many participants noted a significant change in public acceptance of grassroots fundraising efforts in the last twenty years, stating that while then it was impossible, today it is not as frowned upon. This has happened for two main reasons: a cultural shift in people’s acceptance to being asked for money and the small growth of economic purchasing power and the beginnings of the development of generational wealth, or financial wealth that is passed down generation to generation.

The first main trend has been people in Central and Eastern Europe becoming more and more accepting of grassroots fundraising tactics and donating in the traditional sense. In the past, organizers have relied primarily on grants and other forms of outside funding. This has produced a lot of great and consistent work and created long-term relationships between communities and the organizations that serve them. Over time, as these organizations do more work in communities and produce tangible results in the quality of life or rights of their communities, these same communities become more open and trusting of grassroots fundraising activities. Along with this, a transition towards more individual economic freedom has created situations where individuals have disposable income and are able to choose how that is spent or donated. When a community can see the real results of an organizations’ work, they are more likely to want to take part financially in the long-term success the group is producing. Along with this shift in attitude there has been a shift in culture as well. During the shift away from the totalitarian control of the past, people held on to a reservation about formally

participating in politically-active organizations in fear of retribution from the state. As the region grows further away temporally from that totalitarian control, they also lose that participation reservation and become more likely to financially support an organization. As these trends continue, and the multitude of different organizations doing work in the region continue to produce results, we will see even better participation and financial contribution trends for these organizations. The work of community organizing will only get easier and the typical organization's ability to grassroots fundraise is a testament to the hard work that has been done to change people's perception of the civil society and nonprofits sector in the region.

The second main trend has been the beginning of the development of generational wealth in the region. As the region has progressed from a planned economy to a market-based economy, generational wealth has begun to grow and become more prominent as wages have risen and quality of life has improved. This means that there are more potential donors and these donors have even more disposable income to contribute to causes they care about. As the economic standing of the region improves, so can the organizations in the civil society and nonprofit sector. The main question moving forward for these organizations will be: can we effectively leverage this economic growth into growth of our organizations? To effectively leverage these trends, organizations will need to incorporate the strategies and tips included in the next section.

The third main trend in grassroots fundraising has been the development of crowdfunding techniques to solicit mass donations from the entire internet-connected world. Generally the way this technique works is that a group or individual creates a listing on a crowdfunding platform, agreeing to pay the platform a certain percentage of the donations that come in. This percentage is the primary income for the platforms and can vary greatly across different sites. Those who have used crowdfunding successfully are able to get a large amount of money with little to no effort from a wide variety of supporters. Initiatives like these have the ability to go viral and receive massive amounts of support from all across the world while some less successful ones are left to wallow on the site and usually end up paying a large amount of the donations received to the platform.

While it is easy to see the mass appeal and popularity of these crowdfunding techniques, groups still need to understand that it isn't a get-rich quick scheme and that just because it is an automated collection, doesn't necessarily mean that your organization will raise a significant amount of money. Along with this issue, some organizers have found difficulty in transitioning successful crowdfunding campaigns into greater organizational capacities or to a broader ability to act in their community. Again,

fundraising is not an end of action, it is the way that groups or organizations are able to better act. If that can't be done then the amount raised means almost nothing. This isn't a fault for crowdfunding as a concept though. The fault in these cases are on the organizers and fundraisers who are unable to transition this amount of money into outcomes for their communities. Before every fundraising campaign, whether it is crowdfunded or not, every member of the group should know exactly how the money raised will be used to improve the group or achieve better results.

Now that the doom and gloom is out of the way, it can't be overstated how much potential crowdfunding has as a tool of grassroots fundraising. All it really does is simplify the process of getting donors engaged and interested in your issue area. By being widely available and easily accessible on these platforms, where all the hosting and payment processes are handled by the platform, it is almost a set-it and forget-it method that can provide residual support for your organization. However, in any fundraising campaign, but especially crowdfunding, the question has to be asked: how will this money improve your groups ability to act?

While crowdfunding provides another avenue for collection, it is hard to tell what future it has in the European context. International Bank Account Number (IBAN) transfers, which are arguably cheaper, more secure, more direct, and easier to use than crowdfunding platforms, have been used successfully by organizers simply posting the IBAN on social media platforms or in email asks. This brings questions about the future of crowdfunding in Europe as it simply may not be needed. However, some groups have found success using crowdfunding and the results of these initiatives are noteworthy. These advancements will be something to keep a close eye on moving forward for all organizers and fundraisers.

For networks like ECON or foundations and grant-making organizations, these stories should serve as a testament to the effectiveness of the regranteeing strategy. Re-granteeing offers organizations: much needed capital funding for events, a way to remain autonomous and independent, and real-life experience running events or initiatives. ECON has seen great success using regranteeing as every single group given funds was able to make at least that money back plus some. Through these benefits, it can also be seen as a form of organizing as a group's ability to operate or organizational capacity can be strengthened. The ECON Fundraising Committee, who oversaw the regranteeing process, has been pleased with the results, in terms of money raised and organizational capacity improved, and would strongly recommend regranteeing to other networks or foundations. Re-granteeing in this sense can be seen as a long-term minute investment in the member organizations that will continue to pay dividends every year.

For ECON, the next steps for the regranting program include looking at increasing the amount and moving the focus away from just events. While events are great and can really help organizations gain notoriety and quickly raise funds, ECON would like to see groups move towards other initiatives or campaigns that more directly improve organizational capacities and increase community engagement. This increase in the initial amount would reflect the increase in engagement that ECON is requesting of member organizations. Along with this, ECON would like to emphasize that donors should play a large role in encouraging and supporting grassroots fundraising from the organizers they give to. These stories are meant to display to donors that these tactics work and can be successful across the Central and Eastern European context. ECON is also looking to play a larger role in assisting member organizations with their day-to-day fundraising activities. A shortfall of the 2019 ECON Small Grants Program was that mentorship was offered but never followed up on, leading some organizers to request mentorship support but never receive it. ECON wants to move towards a system where mentorship is consistently available for any member organization that requests it, especially under future operations of the Small Grant Program.

Another development that organizers and fundraisers will need to keep an eye on is the rate at which governments allow individuals to donate their income tax payment or their percentage tax designation. For most of Europe, this rate is generally anywhere from .5% to 3.5% given to a charity or nonprofit organization of the individual's choice. Establishing this rate has given organizations across Europe a consistent base of support that is relatively unchanging year-to-year. These amounts today are generally small portions of an organization's income and organizations are competing to get active, civic-minded people to choose them as their organization of choice. As this rate is increased or as more people become aware of their ability to donate in this manner, this could become a more prominent portion of nonprofit budgets moving forward.

## Advice from Organizers and Leaders

As a part of the interview process, participants were asked to give advice to a hypothetical, new fundraiser who is looking to start utilizing grassroots fundraising strategies. This section will share some general pieces of advice from some of Europe's best fundraisers and organizers. It is organized into an "Always" column for things organizers should always do and a "Never" column for things organizers should never do.

## Always

- Have complete financial transparency
  - With grassroots fundraising, people are directly giving you their money and they expect those funds to be used appropriately
- Be honest about what you can or can't do
  - Resources can be better managed when you know the limits of your group
- Have explicit rules about finances early on that are clear and enforceable
- Establish clear goals at the start and track your progress using them
- Choose a story and have a narrative
  - Create a brand or instill something in people that they associate with your organization
  - Put every action into the context of this commonly constructed narrative
- Collect as much donor info as possible and be in touch regularly, not just to ask for money but to update on current efforts
- Be sure about why you are doing what you do
  - Have to buy in yourself and truly believe before you ask others to do so
- Use concrete ask strategies that ask for a specific amount or thing
  - Show people exactly what their money would be going towards
- Maintain direct/relevant language when communicating with other groups or people in the community
  - Talk to people with respect and without superiority complex
- Do the research that is necessary and use data and evidence to show problem is relevant to community and local leaders
- Have NEXT STEPS and possible ways to move the issue forward at every level
- Plan long-term and bigger than you originally consider
  - No harm if things don't get big or work out but have to have plan for if the group becomes super successful
- Start with practical issues that are hyper present in a community and have big impacts

- Look for easy wins that have great, immediate impact on a community
- Helps you gain notoriety and makes people more likely to join on with lesser known initiatives

## Never

- Underestimate the importance of small donation
  - Financial amount may not matter but symbolism of trust and security someone feels with your group is much more important
  - Give people the same respect whether it is a \$2 donation or \$200 donation
- Have hidden agendas or alternative goals
  - Public will find out and relationship will be ruined
  - Only has to happen once and people will never give again
- Deviate from commonly created plans
  - Can lead people to be disappointed or disillusioned with the issue or community organizing as a whole
- Just ask people for money
  - Always ask people to participate further and give their opinions and input on what is happening
- Become politically motivated or intertwined with political parties
  - They usually have specific plans in mind and don't always have your intentions at heart for civic groups
- Be afraid to express dissent within the group
  - Groupthink is harmful for long-term success and a group has to have new opinions constantly

## What's Next

Now you have an introduction to thirteen examples of what community organizing and grassroots fundraising looks like in Central and Eastern Europe. Grassroots fundraising can be as small as a courtyard rummage sale or as big as a continental crowdfunding campaign. I have shown a range of events, person to person asking, earned income from sales or classes, monthly memberships, and cutting-edge work on social media. All of these can produce dependable, renewable, and internally controlled revenue that will enable these organizations to involve more people and win more victories.

The main questions asked next are naturally: where is grassroots fundraising going from here and what do these general trends of action mean? As mentioned above, a common refrain from organizers throughout the project was just how impossible any sort of grassroots fundraising would have been just 20 years ago. Some organizers mentioned that the fundraising landscape was less favorable even 5 years ago. These trends make it likely that grassroots fundraising, in terms of cultural acceptance and legal favorability, will become even stronger and more profitable for groups moving forward.

Grassroots fundraising can be a success in Central and Eastern Europe and these stories show exactly how successful these groups can be. A notable thing about this report was how difficult it was for the authors to find negative experiences that groups had with grassroots fundraising. Each participant was asked to describe a negative experience or an event or initiative that wasn't very successful. While there were some negative examples included in this report, many organizers weren't able to identify anything. This might be because many groups or organizers simply haven't conducted enough grassroots fundraising initiatives to have many chances at things turning out poorly, but this lack of negative experiences could be a positive sign for grassroots fundraising.

As grassroots fundraising becomes more and more common, these organizations and groups will become more democratic and receptive to their communities. This will produce stronger groups that are better able to produce outcomes for their communities. Grassroots fundraising has been proven to work across all of these different examples listed above. When groups incorporate these strategies, they are rewarded not only financially, but also with greater levels of participation and engagement from their communities.

### **About the Author**

Drew Coker is a Masters of Public Service candidate at the University of Arkansas Clinton School of Public Service. This report was done through the International Public Service Project (IPSP) aspect of the CSPS curriculum. IPSP is a chance for MPS students to participate in global challenges and work with a partner organization in some way. Coker decided to pursue this opportunity with ECON because of the demonstrated success ECON has in the region along with the challenge of pursuing a project in a new field. Central and Eastern Europe is generally a region that many Americans know little about. This makes this grassroots fundraising project a valuable

contribution to the CSPA completed project list as only one prior project had been completed in the region. Coker also pursued this project because of his belief in collective action. Anything can be accomplished from collective action and developing those interpersonal connections based on our own shared humanity and experiences.

## Appendix 1 (Full Stories)

### Guerilla Urban Beach - Trees at Romai

Trees at Romai offers a great example of community organizing tied in with environmental protection and conservation and community recreation. Along the Danube River in Northern Budapest, Trees at Romai are working to turn a floodplain area into a recreational beach area for the local Romai community. In the current dam system of Budapest, this area is flooded every year during the rainy season, causing a complete misuse of the pristine natural area. Trees at Romai are working to alter the dam system so that this area is protected from flooding and can be used by the community not only as a beach but as a place for the Romai community to come together. The local government however wants to keep the current dam system, cut down the trees in the area, and develop the land for housing estates. Following through with the governmental plan would eliminate one of the few natural escapes among

urban Budapest. This action from the government provided the organization with their name and a popular cause operating against the local governments plans.

To bring awareness to the issue and to raise money from the community, Trees at Romai worked to have special events where they brought the community together in the floodplain area. At one of these events, the group led the community in a trash collection and tree planting operation as well as instructed people how to build handmade canoes to take out on the Danube River. In another event they “opened” the beach area for the day, (e.g. picked a day where the river wasn’t flooding the area) and invited the community to come and treat the area like a normal public beach. As this event was technically against the law, the group was concerned about people actually participating. However, the event was ultimately a true success, as the group was able to demonstrate that the area can be used in a recreational way. This event also was instrumental in spreading awareness in the community and soliciting community donations. As many of the group members were avid rowers and outdoorsmen, they used their specialities and interests to effectively raise awareness about this issue and create a public movement.

In terms of grassroots fundraising, Trees at Romai were able to sell merchandise, including hats, buttons, bags, and t-shirts with group slogans in exchange for symbolic donations to the group at both of these events. These worked to spread awareness of the group and give the informal group more notoriety and visibility in the community. When someone wears a group’s hat or shirt around town then that is basically a free interactive advertising board which can be pivotal for groups where visibility to the issue area is of the utmost importance. Along with this merchandise, the group was able to sell food and drinks at the events which led people to stay at the event longer and feel more inclined to give a donation to the group. For their efforts, the group spent approximately 500 EUR and were able to raise 701 EUR, managing a 201 EUR profit from the event. While this was a great financial success for the group, the real positives came from the intangible awareness they were able to create in the community. After these two popular events, the community is now looking out for the activities of the group and anticipating action events in which they can participate. The group now boasts a 2,000 person newsletter and 13,000 “likes” on their Facebook page. Fundraising in this sense can be about so much more than money. Because of these events and the larger work of the group, the group now has the ear of thousands of active people who are looking to get involved and can leverage that activism into organizational capacity to be utilized for future work.

Going forward, Trees at Romai is studying the Central Park model of community upkeep and maintenance of the natural area. This would include selling memberships that are

explicitly tied to maintaining and improving a part of the natural area. This model necessitates finding donors who are willing to give money and also give their time, effort, and sweat to a project. These are exciting times for conservation community organizing and Trees at Romai!

revenue: 244.915 HUF (701 EUR)

cost: 175.345 HUF (500 EUR)

**profit: 69.570 HUF (201 EUR)**

## Home Ground/Hope instead of Consumption- Freie Ungarische Botschaft (Free Hungarian Embassy)

For the Hungarian expatriates in Berlin, living away from their home country comes with a host of challenges. Many of these issues have been exacerbated by the rise of the Fidesz party and Viktor Orban. A group of these Hungarian expats felt that they had to do something to express their disagreement and worries about the way their home country was being ruled and asked themselves the question: what can we do for Hungary from abroad? Today, Freie Ungarische Botschaft (Free Hungarian Embassy in English) (FUB), holds awareness and community discussion events where Hungarian expats, local interested Germans, and the entire multicultural community of Berlin can come together and freely discuss the current events in Hungary. Along with these discussion events, FUB works to increase awareness and provide a space for activism for civic-minded Hungarians. Providing this space for activism is extremely cathartic for these expats because they previously felt they had no say or power after moving away from Hungary.

FUB provides two great examples of community-centered fundraising and activism that explicitly utilize their unique group standing and membership traits to better operate. First, FUB organized a discussion series called Hazai Pálya (Home Ground) on current events in Hungary to give Hungarians the opportunity to vent frustrations and discuss political updates. These events included inviting notable speakers from Hungarian civil society to come give lectures followed by group discussions. These events also showed Hungarians that they weren't alone in their frustrations, worries, or fears about the regime in Hungary. At these lecture events, the group asked that participants contribute a small amount of money to help cover the cost of the venue and other costs related to the event. Also, to keep the amount contributed low from participants, FUB sought out partnerships with local sympathetic businesses to mitigate the costs of the events. With these donations, the group was able to pay for all needed costs and, more importantly, build stronger bonds within the Hungarian community.



Photo 3: Home Ground Event, FUB, courtesy of Andrea Brenner and Balazs Szigeti

The second major grassroots fundraiser for FUB is their yearly Christmas Fundraiser called *Hoffnung statt Konsum* (Hope instead of consumption in English). Every year before Christmas, FUB finds a cause in Hungary to support for the holiday season. In the past, these have been civil society organizations, individuals, or activists doing the difficult work of organizing and human rights advocacy in Hungary. FUB utilizes their social media pages and newsletter as the main ask strategies for this fundraiser. This strategy allows them to solicit donations from Hungarian communities across Central Europe and even in the United States. To garner support in this campaign, FUB combines emotional appeals with appeals to national identity and pride to get people to donate. Among these strategies, there is a key implicit understanding that the government is not supporting these important groups in Hungary, making it a clear and present need for Hungarians abroad to contribute and do something beneficial for those still living in the country. These campaigns have been extremely effective as the group has been able to raise 1202 EUR for select organizations in Hungary, contributing to the longevity of civil society in the country and giving expat Hungarians a platform of action.

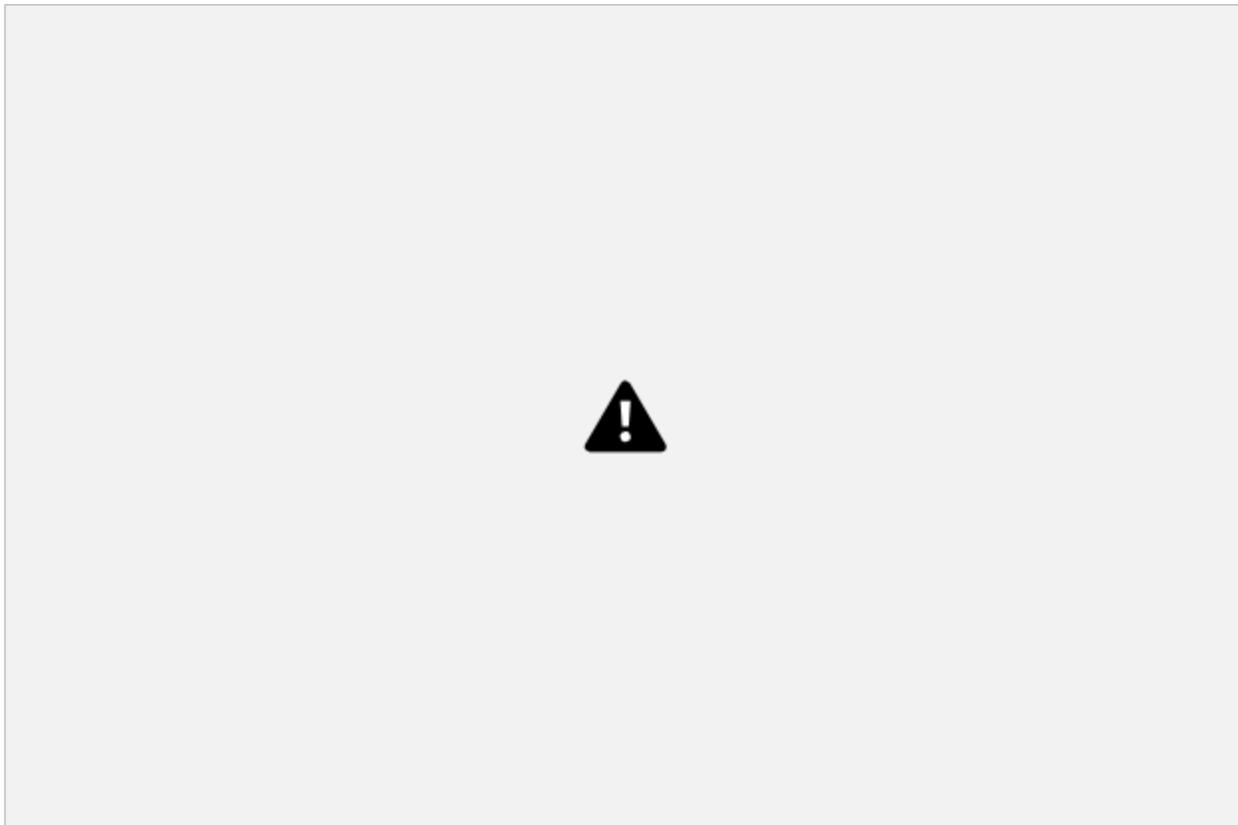


Photo 4: Home Ground Event, FUB, courtesy of Andrea Brenner and Balazs Szigeti

Overall, the group has been able to raise 4000 EUR through these events, creating a successful model and base set for further action. FUB teaches us that anyone can become active and that utilizing effective messaging for fundraising and organizing can pay dividends for future investment in the organization. Along with this effective messaging, FUB has been able to instill or ignite an already existing sense of ownership of the political issues of Hungary into their expat communities. By sensing this need in their own community, the organizers were able to effectively motivate people to care and that is the basis of all future action. Ownership leads to action and action leads to results for the community.

## Neighborhood Day - The Center for Community Organization (CKO)

CKO, based in Banska Bystrica, Slovakia, is a community organizing resource and training center with multiple project areas in Banska Bystrica and throughout Slovakia as a whole. CKO primarily finds funding through grants but has a few key examples of grassroots fundraising at the intersection of community organizing. CKO works to create

ownership of issues within communities and grassroots fundraising is just one of the many tools used to achieve this goal. For example, CKO's sponsored the Citizens Initiative Zvolen-Zapad's Neighborhood Day in Banska Bystrica. Fundraiser Sanja Nikolov and her team were able to transition this community festival event from being fully funded by CKO money to being 100% supported by the local community. Nikolov and her team leveraged their relationships with local businesses, utilized social media to target and ask potential donors, instituted a popular raffle, as well as placed collection boxes around the event to help fund the cost. The goal every year for this event is to raise 10,000 EUR. Every year right after Christmas, the five-month planning process starts, ultimately culminating in a well-run and, more importantly, well-funded, useful event for the citizens group and CKO.

Nikolov realized that entrepreneurs will participate when they can get something in return for their donation or participation. Utilizing prominent advertising at the event and publicly thanking the businesses who participated went a long way in incentivizing local business owners to participate.

On the day of the Neighborhood Day event, the organizers set up collection boxes around the event area with explicit advertising about the citizens group and CKO, creating an opportunity for people to support the event they were enjoying. Giving people the chance to take part in the event gives people a sense of pride and ownership in the event. When they know exactly how much it costs to rent a stage or sound equipment or how much a street permit costs, they can then donate amounts based on that information. This gives people the idea that they are paying explicitly for a certain aspect of the event. This can increase the amount an average person donates and increases the likelihood that they donate in the first place.

At the event, a large raffle is held that fully pays for the citizens group's office rent for the year. Every year, along with the monetary donations, Nikolov and her team ask that the participating businesses donate a small prize or gift to be raffled off. After a few years of successful operation, this raffle is now widely popular in the community and people look forward to participating. This raffle shows that the average person has connections and relationships that can be leveraged into potential benefits for a group or organization. The only thing stopping people from utilizing these relationships is asking. The worst thing that can happen is that someone says no and if even one business or entrepreneur decides to participate then that is a successful campaign. Also consider the benefits of having someone say no. At the end of the day, that person or business now knows three key things about your group: who you are, what your group does, and why it is important for you to exist. Every single interaction that a group has with a person or local business increases publicity and visibility, thus contributing to the

larger goals of the organization in minute ways. Along with this, while someone may say no this year or this funding cycle, the fact that they were asked now gives an organization space in that person's head. This means that next year or next cycle when they are asked again, they already know about the organization, they already know what the organization does, and they already know why the organization is important, meaning they are then much more likely to donate than they were the last time.

## Community Center and Creative Parties - Serbia on the Move

Serbia on the Move was founded 10 years ago based on the work of Marshall Gantz, primarily operating in Belgrade with some work groups working around rural Serbia. Serbia on the Move prioritizes empowerment, education, and working towards long-term change from within a community's own power. Serbia on the Move takes a decentralized approach to organizing by operating in smaller, topic-area working groups. This section will focus on a group in Eastern Serbia and their work in refurbishing a village community center and an education-centered working group working in Belgrade and the creative, innovative fundraising techniques used in both cases.

For the group in Eastern Serbia, they were able to work with the community and local government to renovate a community center that had been long abandoned. Along the way, the group handled the renovation process and asked the community to donate in non-traditional ways. This meant that instead of receiving money from the already poor community, they asked the community to contribute to specific needs or projects with the community center. For example, the group quickly found a need for more chairs so that group events and large gatherings could take place in the community center. So naturally the community donated what they could spare: extra chairs. This meant that the larger community can enjoy the community center to a larger degree. When an event or gathering now happens in the community center, community members can feel and see tangible effects of their collective action. This story tells us that innovative grassroots fundraising can happen anywhere. The group identified a problem, asked the community to become involved, and the community responded with an outpour of support and action to improve their own lives. What is this but pure, unadulterated grassroots fundraising and direct action? While the stakes are low and ultimately the group could have just bought chairs, the group showed to the community a direct, simple way that they could improve their and their neighbor's lives. Winning these small victories at the start of a community action can provide a big moral boost for organizers as well as prove to a community that a) the organizations have their best interest in mind and b) their smaller, individual actions and choices can play a part in a larger collective movement.

The Serbia on the Move education working group works to promote access to education and improving education outcomes across Serbia. From their main work in Belgrade, the working group has found creative ways to both fundraise and provide educational experiences and opportunities for the people of Belgrade. For these actions, Serbia on the Move does not work in the realm of charity but rather is looking for ways that underprivileged people can improve their own standing with the assistance of Serbia on the Move. This ethos shines through in the next examples.

The first creative example utilizes the nostalgia for the 1980s and 1990s. The working group put on a “retro dance party” to raise money to purchase braille books for a school for the blind in Belgrade. For these specialty schools, the majority of their funding comes from the state but at random points they have specific needs that are unplanned or were not thought of when the budget was allocated by the state. The education working group found that the school needed more braille books for the students to read, but these books are quite expensive and the school was not able to buy them themselves. For the retro dance party, the education working group sold admission tickets and found that the community was extremely open to this and willing to support the cause. At the end of the day, the group was able to buy 10 books for the school, increasing their ability to serve the blind children. For the working group, donating something tangibly valuable to the school is so much more effective than just giving money.

The second example combines Serbia on the Move’s mission and values perfectly. In Belgrade, it is common to see people with disabilities selling magazines on the street to pedestrians. This gives the disabled people financial security and autonomy in their actions. Instead of feeling like a burden by relying on others, these people can make their own decisions and contribute to their own future and success. The education working group wanted to find a way to support these people in their work and found a way to combine the educational goals of their working group with building autonomy of action in their community for underprivileged people. The group decided to host an educational Historical Costume Party where people were asked to come dressed as famous people from history. At the party, people were able to learn about historical figures they may have not known about before and interact with people from their community. While this isn’t necessarily community organizing in any traditional sense, the action resulted in people donating money for a good, collective cause and gave a community the space to grow together in a fun way. After the event, the group was able to buy magazines from these disabled people with the money raised. This strikes an important difference between charity and community organizing, as the community came together to support these people through an exchange of goods/services for

money instead of just handing out money. This preserves the disabled person's integrity and autonomy as they then don't feel that the money is underwritten with any expectations.

These creative actions prove that not every action has to be something serious or dour. When two or more people come together to work for a common goal, there is the possibility for grassroots fundraising and the possibility for a difference to be made in the community or in your neighbors' lives. Serbia on the Move provides two main points for grassroots fundraising: 1) every donation, whether it is 2 EUR or 200 EUR deserves respect and 2) connecting fundraising efforts with a larger mission, credo, or set of values creates a stronger, more financially stable organization.

## Newspaper Public Meetings - Together for Debrecen

Together for Debrecen formed in 1998 to focus on local cultural or political issues in Debrecen, a city of about 200,000 inhabitants in eastern Hungary. Their most successful action has been the founding of the online newspaper "The Debrecenir" which is an independent, non-profit newspaper devoted to unbiased accounts of local and sometimes nation-wide cultural and political issues. The Debrecenir aims to be an impartial educational tool for the people of Debrecen and this means that they do not receive money or support from any government agency, making it key that they source donations from the Debrecen community in the most egalitarian, grassroots way possible. The Debrecenir subsists on paid subscriptions and donations from the people who read their content and use their website. This means that they are dependent on the community rather than some larger organization or government agency. While this funding arrangement is necessary for The Debrecenir's survival as an independent newspaper, it makes it difficult to meet consistent fundraising goals as people generally do not want to pay for internet content or news. Despite this predicament, the group has kept access open to everyone because they believe the information they provide is critical for the average citizen to be engaged and active in their communities.

At the start, the group had 14 members who were able to solicit people they know about what content the group should focus on and provide an initial donation to the cause. The group met and every person made a list of friends and family that they believed would care about the issue of free and open journalism. After this meeting, each member met with or called the people on their list and were able to collect over 300 participants out of 500 asks over the course of six months, proving that free and open journalism could be successful and was greatly needed in Debrecen. This original base of support led them to jumpstart the newspaper and begin to solicit online donations and paid subscriptions. This early success proves the idea that every member of your group

or community has a network of people that care and are willing to donate or participate in collective initiatives. Can you think of 15-20 people that you can call on right now to donate a small amount to your organization? Make a list and see what happens. These original personal lists were the original database of support that the newspaper can now call upon any time to give. The group has found some success in using email asks and newsletter appeals to these original donors. Having this early network means that your organization doesn't have to put in the work later to find people who care. This snowball sampling approach can only get larger and larger as more and more people are asked to contribute.

Accountability and dependence on the local community is essential for keeping The Debrecenir independent and free, meaning that getting input from the local community is highly important. The Debrecenir is able to get this input from the local community and solicit for subscriptions or donations at the same public meetings. The group hosts meetings with the public where the Editor-in-Chief and journalists can solicit people for what topics they care about and what issue areas the newspaper should focus on or address. This community-centric model creates trust and accountability that go both ways. The public will decide to read the content or pay for a subscription if the newspaper is able to write stories that are relevant and honest and the newspaper has to be accountable for writing the content that people find to be relevant, honest, and important. At these meetings, the group is able to prove to people that the newspaper will be honest and open to the public, increasing the likelihood that people will contribute or purchase a subscription. Including this personalized touch for the online newspaper is important as it is quite easy for people to consistently read content posted online and never interact with someone from a newspaper. Creating this connection, where someone can give their personal input or opinion, creates ownership among the community, increasing the chances that someone will want to financially support the group.

Together for Debrecen shows us that this personal connection can be key for an all-online form of activism. These types of public accountability events show that creating consistent sources of fundraising can be as easy as checking in with your community, even when an organization isn't explicitly asking for money. Simply asking your community members what they think about a set of issues can provide two things: a) a glimpse into what your community needs b) the feeling in the community that your organization really does care about what happens to them. This provides vastly important information for a community-centered group. People will give if they care, and showing people that the organization cares about them and their issues, and are working explicitly to provide them services makes them so much more likely to consistently donate.

## Community-Centered Fundraisers - CRAION

CRAION, a community organizing and resource training center in Cahul, Moldova, was able to mobilize and support four community groups in 2019 to find a problem in their community and fundraise to fix the problem. The groups were able to fix a lot of small problems around their community including: organizing the building of a playground for children, building a path for disabled people to the public library, developing a community sports field and organizing sports lessons, and installing trash bins around the community center to reduce littering. While these things may seem small in the grand scope of community organizing, these are the things that matter to a community. Providing a direct improvement in the lives of people in your community, of your friends and family is really what it is all about. These examples show how grassroots fundraising in this sense is a direct tool used to achieve outcomes; it is not its own separate idea. When people in a community can tangibly see what an organization will accomplish with their money (and when the organization is explicit in their pitch to them), the organization will have much more success in grassroots fundraising.

These working groups were able to raise 2000 EUR from a village that had only 3,000 inhabitants, showing just how successful grassroots fundraising can be when the organizers effectively identify community-wide problems. This amount is even more impressive when one considers what they actually did. The group was able to spend almost no money utilizing their creative spirit through these examples below.

To start, the working groups held a community-wide, traditional Moldovan dance party outside in the summer. The local community was able to dress up in traditional clothes and do the traditional Moldovan dances all together. When the people became tired or hot after a while, they were able to purchase drinks and snacks from the local group. A special hit at the party was the lemonade provided by the group. The group was able to get a local beekeeper to donate honey to provide the sweetener for the lemonade, while other members of the group were able to compile other in-kind donations from around the community.

Along with this dance party, the group also distributed collection boxes to local businesses. After two weeks of collection, the group announced how much was raised at each location. This made the local businesses and community treat the boxes as a sort of competition and pride took over from the local business owners. This made the participating business buy-in to the fundraising so much more and led to the community participating to a higher degree.

To attract a younger crowd to the campaign (as a traditional dance party is not exactly as fun as a nightclub or disco), the group decided to hold fundraising screenings of popular movies and disco parties. Charging admission to these events led to the group raising great money and contributing these funds towards the community projects. The main lesson from this campaign is that this group didn't just get lucky in that the community latched on to the cause or campaign miraculously. The working groups first identified the problems that the community cared about and then used the grassroots fundraising strategies as a tool to help correct those problems. Now when someone from the community uses one of the improvements that they contributed to, they feel a stronger connection to their community and a stronger resolve to support more campaigns that could improve quality of life in the community. Tangible wins like the ones accomplished by the working groups have long-lasting impacts on a community and can be used as a way to introduce a new community to community organizing and grassroots fundraising. Once a community can see the benefits of the first project, the following projects come easier and easier. The first project will always be the most difficult as organizers may not have the right experience or skills or the community may be wary of organizing or collective action, but after going through this process once, the community becomes more open to participating or supporting. Building on this first foundation of success is key for organizational management.

The focus in this sense is not on the fundraising itself, but rather on how the fundraising can contribute to quality of life improvements. The first mistake many organizers make is fundraising before they can identify a problem. This creates two situations: the group has money but no tangible issue or the group is unable to successfully fundraise because they have no tangible issue to champion. Facing the reality of your issue area is key for successful operations and fundraising. Ask yourself at the start of your fundraising or issue campaign: what issue or problem are we addressing, why are we doing this, who are we asking, and what will the money do to change the issue? If you are able to answer these questions, then you are ready to start fundraising. If not, contemplate these elements before fundraising and try to address why you cannot answer these questions effectively.

## Crowdfunding and Apartment Developments - Floreasca Civica

Floreasca Civica, based in the northern Floreasca neighborhood of Bucharest, works to preserve local green spaces and parks around the city. Unfortunately, sometimes this is a losing battle when in opposition to large-scale developers that have support from the city or regional governments. Nonetheless, Floreasca Civica works to maintain a high quality of life for residents in Bucharest by supporting the creation of and preservation of already existing parks and green spaces. This issue hits close to home for members as

Floreasca is known as one of the “greenest” (in terms of parks and open green spaces) neighborhoods in all of Europe. For this storybook, their campaign against plans for a large high-rise apartment complex on the site of the old Ford Motor Company factory provides us with great lessons.

At the start of the campaign, the group implemented normal grassroots community organizing efforts (letter writing campaigns, door-to-door knocking in the neighborhood, attending public forums about the issue, etc.). However, the group found little to no success in these endeavors, instead choosing to switch to a more legal approach, attempting to nip the project in the bud at the planning juncture. To finance this legal approach, including paying for a lawyer and assorted legal fees, the group launched three grassroots fundraising campaigns.

For two of these campaigns, the group relied on online crowdfunding, utilizing the local Romanian crowdfunding platform Sprijina (“support” in English). The first campaign, titled “Stop the destruction of the Floreasca neighborhood!” got almost 8500 views on the website, ultimately raising 2500 EUR and being a great success not only from the amount raised, but also the publicity that people sharing the campaign online gave the issue. The second campaign, titled “STOP Santier in Cartier” (“stop the construction site in the neighborhood” in English, but with less rhyming flair), was able to get close to 6000 views and raised 3100 EUR from 111 participants. While these sums are quite impressive, one has to also remember just how expensive a legal action can be. As they were a David fighting a Goliath, the group quickly found that the legal approach was one that requires large amounts of funds and time as they are pitted against the vast resources of the developers.

Opriti distrugerea cartierului Floreasca!

de Floreasca Civica



4559 vizualizari

12,004 lei din 12,000 lei

1 zile ramase

TRIMITE SMS 10 EURO

Trimite 'sprijina 1121 numele tau' la  
Orange: 7560 Vodafone: 7410

FOLOSESTE CARDUL "SPRIJINA SI TU"

10, 50, 100 lei

Sprijina acest proiect

Photo 5: Screenshot of online crowdfunding campaign from Floreasca Civica. Sprijina (4559 views) 12,004 lei raised (2485 EUR)

<https://www.sprijina.ro/cauze/floreasca>

As time went on, the group found themselves having to constantly update their supporters on complex legal actions that were happening within the lawsuit. In May 2019, the group held a public forum in the park across the street from the development site and gave updates to the community about the progress of the lawsuit. Along with these updates, the group was also able to ask for legal assistance that could be donated from group members that have legal experience or expertise. During this two-hour meeting the group was able to raise 500 EUR from 90 participants for the legal fees and gain the assistance of community members that volunteered to assist with the legal aspects.



Photo 6: Community Information Meeting. Floreasca Civica, April 2019

Ultimately, even though the group had great success in mobilizing the community in support of the lawsuit, the case was eventually decided in favor of the developers and the buildings are under construction. While it is impossible to say how things would have happened if the group had stayed focused on the community organizing and collective action approach they started with, the lawsuit ultimately ended up being extremely costly and time consuming for the group. This example however, while it was ultimately a failure, can provide us great lessons for future grassroots fundraising efforts. An important question for the group moving forward is would it have been

cheaper to hire a community organizer to pursue more grassroots initiatives? Could the results have been different through community organizing?

This action shows us two key lessons about grassroots fundraising: 1) online crowdfunding can be really effective not only for raising funds but also raising awareness and 2) finding the organizational capacity that is in the community can be a form of grassroots fundraising.

For crowdfunding, the ability to donate and pledge online from anywhere has greatly altered the realities of modern fundraising. Because of the online format, where a campaign can be amplified to hundreds of thousands or millions of people through sharing on social media, the potential of every single campaign or initiative has been magnified 1000 times. Both crowdfunding campaigns from Floreasca Civica prove this perfectly. Rather than going door-to-door and having 60-70% of people agree with them (out of the maybe 30% of people who are actually home), they are able to skip to the 60-70% of people who agree and are interested enough to donate automatically. This saves an organization invaluable time and resources that can be better spent on fighting other fights. In this same vein, when someone donates to a cause online, they have to provide at least a name and most likely an email address. Using this information to follow up with people on project updates will greatly increase the likelihood that they choose to donate further or get involved in a more concrete way.

However, this new world of crowdfunding has created some unforeseen problems for organizations. The question naturally arises after the initial round of crowdfunding, “it is great that all of these people donated, but how many of them will actually now become involved in the fight beyond that?” and then “how are organizers using these crowdfunding resources to not only raise funds, but also to radically improve the reach, operational power, and capacities of their organizations?” That question is up to each organizer to manage with their groups and is still largely up in the air in terms of how professional fundraisers see it. While these questions have to be answered for the long-term success of a group, it cannot be overstated how effective, easy, and hands-off online crowdfunding can be for simply raising large amounts of money and awareness to an issue.

The second lesson that arises in this story is how a group can fundraise through the skills and expertise of community or organization members. While this is not fundraising in the traditional sense, finding these skills or knowledge in your group can greatly improve your financial standing. For example, instead of paying someone to design a logo for your group, instead try to find someone in your group that is willing to volunteer their time or instead of paying someone to cater an event, see if there is anyone in your

group who can supply food or refreshments on a volunteer basis. These in-kind donations can drastically cut the cost of an event or initiative and free up money to be better spent on activism. In the Floreasca Civica example, they were able to get legal help from the local community who had legal experience, which greatly helped their lawsuit and freed up some of the money they would have had to pay to the lawyer. While no one literally gave them money in this example, their financial standing was improved and at the end of the day, is that not what fundraising is about? When a new member joins your group or organization, ask them directly, in person or on a new member survey, if there are any special skills they have or special hobbies that would be relevant to the organization. Getting people to participate in this way also improves how that member feels about the organization. When people are doing something they want to do or have a talent in, they feel a) much more accomplished, b) fulfilled in their desire to help, and c) much more likely to continue participating in the organization's activities.

## Protest Party - The City is for All Pécs

The City is for All Pécs, based in Pécs, Hungary, is a homeless rights advocacy group that works to make sure that homeless people have the same rights and freedoms as everyone else. The group organizes homeless people to advocate for their own rights, preserving their dignity and autonomy in a way that some other groups have not been able to do. When one thinks about a charity or nonprofit for the homeless, typically one thinks of free meal operations or homeless shelters, however, the City is for All Pécs works to help homeless people improve their legal and political standings themselves. This type of advocacy does not have the direct impact of a meal being provided to someone or giving someone a place to sleep for the night, which has caused some issues in people being willing to donate to the cause. The City is for All Pécs is working more towards long-term improvement in the quality of life, which does not have as immediate of results as some of the other more charity-focused organizations. In this group, the homeless people work as advocates and organizers themselves. Taking on this responsibility of action for improving their own circumstances, all the while living and experiencing the realities of homelessness, is admirable and deserves recognition and support.

The grassroots initiative that will be covered here is the Protest Parties that the group has been running for two years with four in total having occurred. These events typically involve a local pub owner, who they have a long-standing relationship with, giving them the space for the night to hold an advocacy/awareness event filled with lots of fun and education. At the parties, the group holds roundtable discussions or lectures about issues affecting life as a homeless person in Pécs, the legal rights of the homeless, and

any political developments that could help or harm the homeless population in Pécs. The group is also able to sell merchandise including hats, shirts, and buttons at a booth along with distributing pamphlets and brochures about their group, informational material about the rights of the homeless, and other resources. These groups are quite successful in raising money for the organization at these parties, even able to double the 200 USD granted to them through the ECON Small Grants Program. The group has also found success with hosting local concerts at the pub and evenly splitting the door rates with the pub owner. This is a mutually beneficial arrangement as the group gets the space for free and is able to get great publicity and visibility from the community by putting on a concert, and the pub owner is still able to make some money for their time and space. For the group, they are also able to increase community awareness of local homeless issues which is the basis for their work. At the end of the day, it is always fun to go to a pub with friends and spend some time socializing, but the educational aspects and awareness of these events are the organization's goals.



Photo 7: Protest Party and participants, The City is for All Pécs, ECON Small Loans Program Final Report

There are two major lessons from these fundraisers: a) ask for more from your community on a deeper level in terms of fundraising and organizing and b) find the space or arrangement that works for your organization and your community.

For The City is for All Pécs, the fact that homeless people are directly benefiting from the work of the group and are also the main fundraisers and volunteers, shows that it is not impossible or improper to ask for more from your community (in terms of what they

do for themselves). To do this, a group has to first establish themselves and their mission and be able to explain fully and succinctly how their organization's work is beneficial to the community. Once that relationship is established in the community, a relationship built on mutual trust and appreciation, then an organization can start asking for deeper engagement in terms of donating, volunteering, or supporting. This is difficult work, as it is not as easy as talking to people from the community and trying to build rapport. This takes a series of meetings and discussions aimed at determining a mutual benefit arrangement. This process may also determine that your group or initiative is not actually what is needed from the community, which some find to be the most horrible thing that can happen to a community organizer or fundraiser (though in reality, it is not). Determining where the organization stands in relation to the rest of the community, whether it operates outside of or within the community, can weigh greatly on the future of an organization and its ability to operate grassroots fundraising strategies.



Photo 8: Protest Party shirts and merchandise booth, The City is for All Pécs, ECON Small Grants Program Final Report

Ultimately, every donation is a transaction. There is nothing that is given up completely freely. The community members that donate may not expect a good or service in the traditional market sense, but rather expect that the value of their money is returned to them in some action or initiative of the group. Donation necessitates mutual trust, a physical manifestation of the community's beliefs in you. It is like an endorsement of activity, where the community says to either yes or no in terms of what is offered.

Finding the space or arrangement that works for your community is key for building and utilizing fundraising strategies. The group has been successful in these Protest Parties

because they have been able to effectively combine the fun, social aspect of the pub with the awareness and work of the organization. Being able to fundraise and gather in a collective space allows for consistent fundraising in this central location. The pub is an easy, neutral space where people would feel comfortable learning about a new organization or becoming active in a new cause or initiative. The community aspect of it, where someone can sit down and talk to a potential donor or volunteer and fully flesh out why the group is important creates great dividends for the group. This interpersonal connection is key for fully explaining the more long-term, less visible goals of the organization, making a person much more likely to donate or participate on a deeper level. Finding a similar arrangement, where group members are able to engage with the public or other members in a neutral, mutually respectful space can create the basis for growth and long-term financial success, especially for groups where the mission and goals require some time to fully explain.

## Flea Market - Lively Gyall

Lively Gyall, operating in Gyall, a northern neighborhood of Budapest, works to improve the quality of life in the neighborhood, act as a watchdog for the local government, and get the local community engaged in civic issues. The group was able to get a big, early win when they successfully lobbied the local government for an improvement in the street light system in the area which was sorely lacking. For the most part, the group is small and without formal organization, but this has not stopped them from taking on initiatives and campaigns on specific issues.

After their initial wins, the group was trying to find ways to get the community more involved in the group and raise money at the same time. The group had the initial thought that everyone has junk in their house that they neither want nor need. Using this thought, the group then came up with the idea that the group would hold an impromptu flea market with donated junk from members to sell for the group. Being able to get rid of their unneeded possessions, while also making the group money, is a mutually beneficial relationship. The group was able to set up in the courtyard of one of the groups' members that lived close to the weekly farmers market in Gyall. Holding the flea market on the day of the farmers market ensured that there was a lot of foot traffic of people who had cash and were ready to spend money.

The group was able to successfully get all of the stuff together in the courtyard and had more than 150 people come through and look at items. Eight representatives from the group were there to sell and communicate with the community. Over the few hours, the group was able to raise close to 257 EUR, outraising the initial 180 EUR given to them through the ECON Small Grants Program. At the end of the day, the group was able to

easily raise a significant amount of money (with almost no overhead costs) and help their group members clear out the junk in their house! While it was not your classic “donation” since people were exchanging money for an item, most of the items were priced very competitively (ranging from ,3 EUR to 20 EUR. The group was able to turn this money into a new camera for social media and video purposes and a projector for group meetings. Fundraising in this manner is not the overall goal, but rather is a means to get to greater group capacities (better social media postings, more engaging meetings).

This example shows us how knowing your community (e.g. what they want and what is easy for them) can lead to your community supporting your organization to a greater degree. Not every fundraiser has to be an intricately extravagant event where large amounts of money are exchanged, instead, knowing your community and knowing when, where, and what to do to best meet your community where they are can be pivotal for success in grassroots fundraising. The best thing about this type of event is how easily replicable it is almost anywhere in the world. Having that experience and expertise in your community to a) know when the farmers market or other popular event is going to be b) know that a group member lives in close proximity and c) know that people will want to spend money looking for deals, shows how pivotal it is to be engaged in deep in your community. With these types of events it is very easy to get people engaged in broader conversations as they look for things to buy. Having this space to converse with the community on issues they care about can give an organization specific goals for action and provide the community the opportunity to give an organization feedback. Creating a successful event is not necessarily a stroke of luck, a successful event is a reflection that the organization knows what appeals to the community and that the organization has done the hard work to make this connection.

## Combating Poverty with Literature - Dignified Living Working Group

Dignified Living Working Group primarily operates as a social benefit advocacy group based in Budapest. The group is currently run by the Chance Lab Association, which is a formal organization with close to 20 members who are split into three working groups: energy poverty, poverty in the press, and social benefit advocacy, with the last one being the largest and having the widest focus.

The social benefit advocacy group has found success in several initiatives including advocating for the rights of lower income people and raising awareness and funds from their community to better serve them. The group has found success in translating the group's messaging to the broader cultural and social context of Budapest and Hungary.

This has allowed them to appeal to a wider audience as they operate. The best example from the Dignified Living Working Group was their Combating Poverty with Literature Night. This event involved local Hungarian artists and authors creating an anthology of their work relating to the harsh realities of poverty and then presenting this work at an event. From there, the group invited anti-poverty activists and the local audience to come to the event, listen to some of the artists speak about their work, and then get a signed copy of the anthology book in return for their donation (at least 5000 Hungarian forints) (14 EUR).

Not only was this event a financial success, raising over 300 EUR with almost no overhead costs, but it was also a great opportunity for the group to connect with anti-poverty activists and the larger community alike. This was also a great educational opportunity for the community as they were able to see, in an artistic and easily consumable form, the realities of poverty in Hungary. Creating these awareness raising and educational opportunities has been the main goal for the social advocacy group. As more people are aware of the issues dealing with the social benefit system and poverty in Hungary, the more likely they are to support donate or get involved in the group.

While the group has had great success with different advocacy and educational opportunities, they have also run into a couple problems with events, something that every organizer or fundraiser can relate to. These unsuccessful events can offer us just as many valuable lessons as the successful ones. For example, the group held an event for children and families at a local children's theatre where they invited a famous local artist to come perform a show. The artist agreed and the plan was on for having the event. One main problem became quickly apparent as the event started: the start time was too early in the afternoon for families with children to want to come out as it was afternoon nap time for children. While this is a very small mistake and something that is easily avoidable it also shows how important it is to ask your organization: is it going to be easy for our community to attend? In this case of the children's theatre event, if someone had considered that families usually do not want to go out during their children's nap time (because normally children have to have rest during the daytime) then the event could have been moved two hours later and been wildly successful and beneficial for the community.

Another example from the anti-poverty activists that we can learn from is a fundraising event they put on at a ruin pub in Budapest. The idea for the event was to sell cakes and cookies at a ruin pub who was sympathetic to the cause. The group was able to sell a lot of baked goods, distribute their pamphlets, and have great conversations about the

issues with students at the ruin pub, but this did not translate into many new people becoming involved in the group. This was primarily because many of the attendees they talked to were international students and tourists who are not very likely to become involved in a local Hungarian issue. Another problem was that a lot of their pamphlets and materials were only in Hungarian, making it difficult for the international students and tourists to read the materials or follow up with the group after the event. While having these discussions were great and the group was able to sell some of these baked goods, they were unable to leverage this into greater organizational capacity. Again, it cannot be overstated that fundraising is not the point of action. While the group was able to raise some decent money and have these great conversations with the international student community and the visitors of the pub, with this event they were not able to leverage this new relationship into broader public or organizational support.

Besides, these experiences—both the more and less successful ones—became important in the learning process and growth of the group. The question must be asked then, for every action, initiative or campaign, what benefit will come to your group? This is a deep and complex question to ask, but it should be quite easy and clear for your group to answer. If an organization cannot answer this question, then it should take some more time to plan and consider exactly what the organization is trying to get out of an event or action. Being intentional, honest, and open when planning can save your organization valuable time and resources.

## Murder Mystery Night - Together Creating Communities

TCC (Trefnu Cymunedol Cymru / Together Creating Communities) is a Wales-based community organizing training and resources organization providing 35 member groups with community organizing support. While a large part of TCC's funding comes from grants, they have also found success in grassroots fundraising from the traditionally underserved communities in northern Wales. While Wales is quite far away from Central and Eastern Europe, they offer valuable lessons in grassroots fundraising and these examples can provide organizers and funders in Central and Eastern Europe possible ideas for action moving forward. The expansion of ECON membership westward (with two new UK partners) shows the successful model built in Central and Eastern Europe.

TCC has two great examples of creative grassroots fundraising. The first involves a murder mystery party hosted at a local event space where the community was invited to attend and act out the murder mystery drama. TCC sold tickets (25 pounds per person) with over 30 people attending, and were able to get the community and TCC members together to have a fun time acting out the mystery and networking. Along with the

admission tickets, the group was also able to put on a raffle with local businesses and members donating prizes and gifts that they sold tickets for throughout the week. Overall, the event was a great success for the group as there were little to no overhead costs; coupled with the funds from the high value tickets they sold, the raffle funds that were collected at the end of the week, the profitable bar that was set up at the event, and the fact that the event space was rented for free because of a relationship with the owner. The event space contributed to the great night as it was an older-style Victorian mansion, a perfect stage for the murder mystery drama. This is a very valuable resource for TCC as they are able to use this nice and luxurious event space completely for free. To get the most value out of having the event space, the group ran a mindfulness day in the manicured garden of the mansion that was run for free by a member of the organization. Having something like this can make any event better as people feel fancy and special by going to any sort of event at this nice mansion. Since the group is able to use this event space for no charge (as an in-kind donation) from the owner, this means that they can get a high return from people's perceptions, without having to pay the high cost usually associated with it.

While not every organization has such easy access to a high-class, sought-after venue like this, the better lesson is in understanding that everyone has a larger network that they may not initially recognize. Everyone has at least one person they can call on to provide some capacities or needed resources to the organization. Finding these resources within your own organization can greatly reduce your projected budgets and provide smaller organizations, with less initial capital or resources, the things they need to start a fundraising campaign or initiative. Along with this, when someone is able to provide your organization something at a greatly reduced cost or at no cost, it is imperative that your organization makes the person feel appreciated for their effort. No matter if it is someone who is providing an organization with free office supplies or a large, Victorian-style mansion as an event venue, make that person understand just how valuable and important they are to the function of the organization. Everyone enjoys feeling appreciated and that their contribution helped a group that does good work. People also often enjoy other people knowing what they have donated or offered, making it imperative that every offering or donation is publicly thanked and recognized for their help. Remember that no one is mandated to help your organization and that anything offered comes from the belief and trust that the person or company has in your organization.

## Building a Narrative - Radautiul Civic

Radautiul Civic / „Civic Radauti”, a civic engagement and community organizing organization based in Rădăuți, Romania, works to get the local community engaged on local good governance issues and motivated towards achieving commonly beneficial

goals. The group finds themselves in a rural area of Romania, where community organizing and collective action have not been as common as it is in the more urban areas of Bucharest or Iasi. However, Radautiul Civic has been able to mobilize and galvanize support for addressing collective problems in their community. The group has found success in first, instituting a 2 EUR per month membership fee with over 104 paying members and 80 volunteers, many joining their ranks since the COVID-19 pandemic began in the first months of 2020. Secondly, the group has been successful in building narratives around their fundraising and community organizing campaigns. Most notably finding success with their work soliciting donations for sending children to a summer camp and administering their communities' COVID-19 Relief Fund.

Building an accurate, compelling narrative to accompany your fundraising appeals can greatly improve not only the number of donors that come to your door, but also how much each of those donors is willing to give to your organization or initiative. Your narrative has to be: pertinent to the issue, clear in how your action will be carried out, explicit in how your action is unique, and logical in how current efforts are not enough. Look for these traits in the following examples from Radautiul Civic.

The first example of how the group has been able to build a narrative came with a specific anti-authoritarian tinge to it. The group were looking to help children who were in government protective services attend a summer camp and get some recreational relief from their realities. The group first had the idea to apply for a local grant to help cover the cost of the trip, but were abusively denied. The authorities told them it was due to the group's lack of legal status, but the group was not satisfied by this response. This only spurred on the group members who were then able to collect donations from the community. The group told the community that the local government had decided to not help and that the community now had to step up. Their pitch to the community was "if they won't do it, we will," which activated people to come together for the benefit of local children. The group helped the community realize just how important collective action can be for when the government or other legal entities choose not to act or help. Knowing that the community would not approve of how the government handled the situation, the group was then able to get the community to take the matter into their own hands, creating ownership of the issue and, more importantly, producing results for the children of the community. Because of this effective messaging, the group was able to raise 3000 EUR in a two-week period and pay for 15 children to attend the summer camp. At the start of the two weeks, the group began asking friends and family to donate and then from there the fundraising spread like wildfire through the community, showing just how potent community organizing and collective action can be when mobilized by positive, direct messaging.

The second example comes from the time of COVID-19, where at the outbreak of the virus, Radautiul Civic managed a community-wide COVID-19 Relief Fund that was able to reduce anxieties and make sure all in their community were cared for. The group was able to post a link to donate from credit cards on their website and targeted young people and Romanians abroad to help fund this initiative. Overall, the group was able to raise 32000 EUR with a 64 EUR average donation from across Romania and Europe. Just looking at the numbers, this fundraiser was a massive success, exceeding even the expectations of the organizers. But on a more metaphysical level, this event was a triumph of messaging and being right on target with envisioning what was needed from and for their community. By stepping up during their communities' time of need and raising this mass amount of money, the group was able to provide personal protective equipment and hand sanitizers to hospitals, community centers, family doctors, and high schools during their college entrance exams for Rădăuți and surrounding communities. The group found that these younger Romanians and Romanians abroad were highly invested in supporting the initiative because they were worried about their parents who are either in a high-risk group or in Romania while the younger person was in a lesser affected part of Europe. A lot of these young people had disposable income and were willing to donate some of this to make sure their parents and grandparents in Rădăuți and Romania were going to be safe. While the group did not seek out these specific people, once it was clear that they were the majority of donors, they were able to mobilize their messaging to fit this development.

It cannot be overstated how much of a success this initiative was for Rădăuți and the group. Because they identified this need so quickly, they were one of the first groups at the forefront of this issue, making them the go-to place for those in the community looking to come together and fight against the spread of COVID-19. During this campaign, the group was able to transition 40 of their volunteers into full-time dues-paying members. This is directly due to being able to identify this issue so quickly, build the narrative and effective messaging to raise mass amounts of funds, and then successfully deliver on their promises of action. Fundraising in the time of COVID-19 may be more difficult, but there are now so many opportunities for groups or organizations to commit to their communities' new needs. Finding those new needs and developing strategies to help is the future and current reality of community organizing and grassroots fundraising.

## Zumba - Together for Nograd County

Zumba may not be the first activity one thinks of when it comes to community organizing or grassroots fundraising. However, organizer Timi Bogdanne has turned her passion for the dance workout into community-building events throughout the villages of the northern Hungarian region of Nograd. Bogdanne sees these classes as a way for the

community to gather and discuss common problems. Bogdanne then tries to find ways to help the community solve their own problems. After starting these classes, Bogdanne asked for a symbolic amount of money from each participant to help cover the costs of renting a space or any other costs that arise from the problem solving part of the groups. Typically, an average donation is 3 EUR, although all amounts are given freely and there is no recommended amount. Bogdanne has found that other for-profit Zumba instructors typically collect a similar amount as her from each class, showing that the community values her work and the work of the larger group. Over time, the classes became quite popular in the region and Bogdanne was asked to put on these classes in villages all around the Nograd region. Each class could have anywhere from 5 to 25 participants and anyone is able to come no matter their interest level or dancing ability. The most important part is that they come and connect with other members of the community.

With the symbolic amount that is raised from each class, the group decides when and how to spend the money with half being used to rent the event space. Typically, the group will come together after a class and discuss issues, trying to find ways they can operate. Once a problem is identified, the group assigns tasks and members work on that issue. After this, the next meeting is usually a debrief for the rest of the group on the work being done. This creates group accountability and makes sure that everyone is on the same page in action.

One of the biggest efforts of the group are semiannual group retreats, where Bogdanne puts on community organizing and collective action training for group members and their families to attend. This shows an eye for the future that not many organizations have. The amount donated by the group members at each class is put into this fund for future action, making sure that the organization will be primed with trained community organizing members going into the future. The group has also been able to leverage broader community support for these retreats with some business owners stepping up and covering the costs of members' families attending the retreats when group funds weren't sufficient. This shows that the group's efforts are respected in the community, not only for getting people in shape through Zumba, but also for offering this space as a way for strengthening community bonds and developing interpersonal connections.

## Appendix 2 (Practical Resources)

**ECON - Fundraising Training Worksheets - Joan Flanagan Workshop 2013**

<http://econnet.eu/media/Foundraising/Fundraising%20Training%20Worksheets%202013%20-%20J.%20Flanagan.pdf>

**GIFT - Fundraising Worksheet (pdf)**

- <http://grassroots.z2systems.com/np/viewDocument?orgId=grassroots&id=4028e4e55e7f2cd5015e824615ba000b>

**GIFT - Fundraising Discussion Guide - *Mapping our Experiences***

- <http://grassroots.z2systems.com/np/viewDocument?orgId=grassroots&id=e201e61b335e878e013362637ef3002a>

**GIFT - Increasing Board Member Engagement template - *Want a Fundraising Board?***

- <http://grassroots.z2systems.com/np/viewDocument?orgId=grassroots&id=4028e46d4376067d01437f8d5e0f0092>

**GIFT - Fundraising Strategy Chart (pdf)**

- [http://www.z2systems.com/neon/resource/grassroots/document/current/v30\\_n1\\_art05-DLD.pdf](http://www.z2systems.com/neon/resource/grassroots/document/current/v30_n1_art05-DLD.pdf)

**GIFT - Improving Fundraising Budgets Tips (pdf)**

- <https://www.z2systems.com/np/viewDocument?orgId=grassroots&id=4028e46d4240a5d7014245013c85000d>

**GIFT - Earned Income Fundraising Strategies and Organizational Readiness Worksheet (pdf)**

- <https://www.z2systems.com/np/viewDocument?orgId=grassroots&id=b2b81aa83d5e22a1013d60cc54100059>

**Progressive Technology Project- PTP Fundraising Strategy Worksheet**

<https://network.progressivetech.org/system/files/PTP%20Fundraising%20Strategy%20Worksheet.pdf>

**New Hampshire Gives - P2P Email Templates**

<https://www.nhgives.org/info/p2p-email-templates>

**ZOMARON - Essential Fundraising Email Templates**

[https://www.zomaron.com/hubfs/Fundraising%20Resources/Fundraising\\_Email\\_Templates.pdf](https://www.zomaron.com/hubfs/Fundraising%20Resources/Fundraising_Email_Templates.pdf)

## Appendix 3 (General Guidebooks)

### **Association of Fundraising Professionals - Code of Ethical Standards**

<https://afpglobal.org/sites/default/files/attachments/2019-03/CodeofEthics.pdf>

### **Czech Fundraising Center Library**

<https://fundraising.cz/point/library/>

- Database of fundraising resources and helpful websites, blogs, and presentations dealing with general topics in nonprofit fundraising

### **Grassroots Institute for Fundraising Training - Database**

<https://airtable.com/shrZyeVsKOAgrhWp1/tblMjLDQbgw02TPgi?backgroundColor=blue&viewControls=on>

- 600+ open source publication archive on different aspects of grassroots fundraising and organizational management

### **Citizens Community for New York City Grassroots - Fundraising Guide**

[https://www.citizensnyc.org/sites/default/files/public-attachments/workshop/grassroot\\_fundraising\\_oct\\_19.pdf](https://www.citizensnyc.org/sites/default/files/public-attachments/workshop/grassroot_fundraising_oct_19.pdf)

- Helpful tips and tricks for grassroots fundraising, provides possible event ideas and comments for consideration

### **Progressive Tech Project - Grassroots Fundraising Checklist**

[https://network.progressivetech.org/system/files/Grassroots\\_Fundraising\\_Guide.pdf](https://network.progressivetech.org/system/files/Grassroots_Fundraising_Guide.pdf)

- Checklist that works a person through the complexities of beginning a grassroots fundraising campaign

### **Vanguard Foundation - A Grassroots Fundraising Guide for Social Justice Organizations - Raising Money from Individuals in Tough Economic Times**

<https://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/grassrootsfund.pdf>

- Checklist for how to engage in grassroots fundraising during difficult economic times with example templates offered at the end.

### **Hubbub - The Crowdfunding Handbook**

<http://files.hubbub.net/HubbubHandbook.pdf>

- Handbook for managing an online crowdfunding campaign with no prior experience

### **Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation - Fundraising Training**

<https://31bfea33km482lswmk36ltep-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Fundraising.pdf>

- Introduction and guidebook to starting grassroots fundraising. Provides worksheets to determine organizational capacity and a fundraising strategy

### **Centre for Social Innovation - Crowdfunding Guide for Nonprofits, Charities and Social Impact Projects**

[https://socialinnovation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/CSI\\_HiveWire\\_Crowdfunding\\_Guide-2015-1.pdf](https://socialinnovation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/CSI_HiveWire_Crowdfunding_Guide-2015-1.pdf)

- Step by step guide to starting a crowdfunding campaign

### **North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence - Fundraising and Capacity Building Manual**

[http://www.ncdsv.org/images/Fundraising%20and%20Capacity%20Bldg%20Man\\_NCCADV.pdf](http://www.ncdsv.org/images/Fundraising%20and%20Capacity%20Bldg%20Man_NCCADV.pdf)

- Guide on how to develop a long-term fundraising strategic plan including planned outlines and how to best utilize board members or long-term volunteers/staff

### **APLOS - Jumpstarting Your Fundraising Efforts**

<https://2qhmfm2mi2k73lotnn47ul5r-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/academy/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2019/05/Jumpstarting-Your-Fundraising-Efforts.pdf>

- Provides an introduction into general fundraising, focuses on improving existing donor relation strategies and utilizing database technology to track donations/donors

### **GiveSmart - Peer-to-Peer Fundraising Guide**

<https://www.givesmart.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/givesmart-peer-to-peer-fundraising-guide.pdf>

- Guide for starting peer-to-peer fundraising, gives ideas for events and asks key questions of organizations that are thinking about starting small-scale fundraising initiatives

### **Board Source - Fundraising Communications Toolkit**

<https://boardsource.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Fundraising-Communications-TK.pdf?hsCtaTracking=cb59f5d8-067a-4f05-a00d-94e3dc3ac161%7C0f1f8873-3538-424b-8c6b-a72f9cf8cf24>

- Guide on how to develop an organization specific communication toolkit about your organization fundraising efforts

### **Classy Resource Guides - P2P Fundraising Emails**

[http://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/190333/Resource\\_Guides/p2p-fundraising-emails/p2p-fundraising-emails.pdf](http://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/190333/Resource_Guides/p2p-fundraising-emails/p2p-fundraising-emails.pdf)

- Guide and tips for producing effective communication and emails from a organization leadership team to individual fundraisers

### **Network for Good - How to Write Amazing Fundraising Appeals that Raise More Money**

<https://cedarbrook.us/~cedarb9/images/PDF/How-to-Write-Amazing-Fundraising-Appeals-2017.pdf>

- Helpful tips for writing appeals and asks that will help an organization raise more money, focuses on specific aspects of the appeal that can improve its quality

**Igor Polakovic - Internet and New Media Fundraising (presentation)**

<https://fundraising.cz/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/new-world-power-igor-polakovic.pdf>

- Presentation with helpful tips for conducting internet-based and SMS-based donation campaigns

**Charity Village - Fundraising as Community Building (Podcast)**

<https://charityvillage.com/fundraising-as-community-building-with-david-karvinchuk/>

- Podcast exploring the link between fundraising and community development

**CONVIO - Using the Internet to Raise Funds and Build Donor Relationships**

<https://secure2.convio.net/customer/ServiceModules/industryreports/fundraising-guide-2010.pdf>

- Methods of using the internet, email, and crowdfunding to develop fundraising techniques and build community relationships with examples from Canadian and US nonprofits

**Blackbaud - Best Practices for Fundraising Success: Diversifying Giving Channels**

<https://www.blackbaud.com/files/resources/7-12.Desktop.Book.Web.pdf>

- Overview guide to nonprofit fundraising in the modern world. Considerations for grassroots fundraising and using new technology to best fundraise

**Dick Cook - Growing our Fundraising from Good to Great (presentation)**

[https://fundraising.cz/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/growing-fundraising-from-good-to-great-r-cook\\_.pdf](https://fundraising.cz/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/growing-fundraising-from-good-to-great-r-cook_.pdf)

- Presentation on how to improve fundraising strategies, has checklists and guides about how to raise money through multiple different avenues

**Anna Guenther - TEDx How crowdfunding is going to change the world**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1\\_viddQGSQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1_viddQGSQ)

- TEDx presentation on the future of crowdfunding, where it came from and why it is so beneficial for organizations to use

**European Center for Not for Profit Law - USAID 2017 - The Regulatory Framework for Fundraising in Europe**

[http://ecnl.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/The-Regulatory-Framework-for-Fundraising-in-Europe\\_ECNL-research.pdf](http://ecnl.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/The-Regulatory-Framework-for-Fundraising-in-Europe_ECNL-research.pdf)

- Overview of current fundraising practices and status in Europe, fundraising rules and regulations governing CSO activity in Europe as well as ways to make enabling environment more hospitable for European CSOs

## Appendix 4 - Interview Questions

### Interview Questions

**Q1** What is the leadership like in your group? How many people? What do they do?

**Q2** What are your first thoughts when you think about grassroots fundraising? What images come to mind?

**Q3** Has your organization done grassroots fundraising initiatives? If yes... What were these activities like? If no... why not?

**Q4** If you could give advice to an organization that is new to grassroots fundraising, what would you tell them?

- What should a group ALWAYS do?
- What should a group NEVER do?
- Any other advice?

**Q5** Is your group financially secure? Are you operating in consistent deficits or surpluses?

**Q6** Where does your organization's funding come from? Can you give me a ratio breakdown? (ex. What percent from: membership fees, grants, events,

- Do you think this allows your group to be more independent?
- What do your members or volunteers think about grassroots fundraising? Have they expressed either a willingness or opposition to these efforts?

**Q7** What percentage of your organization's funding comes from grants or governmental support either EU, national, state, or local?

- Are there any positive or negative effects you have seen from this funding arrangement?

**Q8** What is holding your organization back from doing more grassroots fundraising efforts? Do you have any competition?

**Q9** Would your target population and community be open to volunteers asking them for money?

**Q10** How would a member of your community react when asked for money? Would that be different if you were asking for money for a specific charitable purpose or just money for the function of your organization?

**Q11** What can ECON do, as an organization, to make grassroots fundraising more common throughout the member organizations?

**Q12** Are there any specific barriers that prevent member organizations from doing more grassroots fundraising?

**Q13** Have you found any other examples of grassroots fundraising from organizations in your area or country?

- What came from that effort?
- Do you have their contact information?

### **Regranting Questions**

**Q1** Please describe your involvement in the ECON regranting process. How did these funds help your organization (new events, increased community presence, improved organizational capacity, etc...)?

**Q2** Was the application and funding process with ECON easy to manage? Were there any unnecessary burdens that created barriers to funding?

**Q3** Does participating in the regranting process make your organization more likely to do grassroots fundraising? What did your group learn from this process?

**Q4** Were you less likely to do grassroots fundraising before the regranting process? What were some barriers there?

**Q5** How do your volunteers feel about the regranting program? Are they resistant or open to it? Why?

**Q6** How did the fundraising help improve your group? Please give specific examples.

## Appendix 5 - Interview Participants

All of these individuals contributed to the creation of this report. While some did not have stories appear in the final report, each one offered great context, examples, and guidance in their interviews. All of these participants' ideas, advice, and logic can be seen throughout the report and this report would not have been possible without their assistance. Thanks again to:

**Gabriela Anghel** - Floreasca Civică - Bucharest, Romania  
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**Werka Strelcova** - Center for Community Organization - Banska Bystrica, Slovakia  
**Chuck Hirt** - Center for Community Organization - Banska Bystrica, Slovakia  
**Maros Chmelik** - Center for Community Organization - Banska Bystrica, Slovakia  
**Sanja Nikolov** - Center for Community Organization - Banska Bystrica, Slovakia  
**Asia Rippel** - Common Things Foundation - Katowice, Poland  
**Nick Gardham** - Community Organisers - Warminster, United Kingdom  
**Peter Giczey** - Together for Debrecen Association - Debrecen, Hungary  
**Silvia Strelciuc** - CRAION CONTACT - Cahul, Moldova  
**Peter Szabados** - Civil College Foundation - Budapest, Hungary  
**Évi Kalló** - Trees at Római - Budapest, Hungary

**Sofia Ursul** - Association of Citizens with Initiative - Cantemir, Moldova  
**Ildikó Baranyi** - Lively Gyál - Budapest, Hungary  
**Timi Bogdanne** - Together for Nograd County - Salgotarjan, Hungary  
**Iulian Boia** - CIVICA - Iasi, Romania  
**Fanni Aradi** - The City is for All Pecs - Pecs, Hungary  
**Lioredana Ciofu** - Asociația Empatis - Lioredana Ciofu  
**Luca Ciubotaru** - Radauital Civic - Radauti, Romania  
**Kay Polley** - Together Creating Communities - Wrexham, Wales  
**Georgiana Vieru** - Fundatia Serviciilor Sociale Bethany - Iasi, Romania  
**Johanna Laszlo** - Dignified Living Working Group - Budapest, Hungary

## References

<sup>[1]</sup> Flanagan, Joan (1995), The Grassroots Fundraising Book: How to Raise Money in your Community. Contemporary Books: Chicago, Illinois. P. 1

Photos:

Photo 1: Grassroots Fundraising Advice Word Cloud, ECON, wordclouds.com

Photo 2: Central and Eastern Europe, Europe E Travel  
<http://www.europeetravel.com/maps/central-europe-map-large.htm>

Photo 3: Home Ground Event, FUB, courtesy of Andrea Brenner and Balazs Szigeti

Photo 4: Home Ground Event, FUB, courtesy of Andrea Brenner and Balazs Szigeti

Photo 5: Screenshot of online crowdfunding campaign from Floreasca Civica. Sprijina  
<https://www.sprijina.ro/cauze/floreasca>

Photo 6: Community Information Meeting. Floreasca Civica, Gabriela Anghel. April 2019

Photo 7: Protest Party and participants, The City is for All Pécs, ECON Small Loans Program Final Report

Photo 8: Protest Party shirts and merchandise booth, The City is for All Pécs, ECON Small Grants Program Final Report