



# GROUP EFFORT

**CROWDFUNDING IS PROVING AN EXTREMELY POPULAR AND EFFECTIVE WAY TO RAISE MONEY FOR GREAT CAUSES – AND IT'S COMING TO A SCHOOL NEAR YOU, SAYS LORRAINE ALLMAN...**

**F**undraising at any age can be a challenge, but most will agree that encouraging children to take part can be a positive and empowering experience. Yet, despite all the advances in technology, many schools continue to fundraise for either themselves or other charities through very traditional means such as sponsored activities, or selling products they have made. Crowdfunding brings fundraising into the 21st century through technology, and offers a fun, educational, and effective way to involve young people in supporting communities near and far.

## What is it?

In its simplest form, Crowdfunding raises small amounts of money from lots of

different people, using an online platform to reach and engage with potential 'pledgers'. Generally it is an 'all or nothing' campaign, which means if you don't reach your financial target, then no money is received.

There are broadly two types of crowdfunding methods available, namely equity – which is predominantly used for commercial purposes where people invest in return for a stake in a business – or donations based, where pledges of money are made for a particular cause, with either nothing expected in return, or a small gift given in return for an amount of money; known as rewards-based crowdfunding, it's this last option that is proving particularly popular with educational organisations.

## Why is it ideal for schools?

Crowdfunding requires a community of people ready to support the campaign, so schools – being able to call on teachers, pupils, families, friends of the school, PTA, and the local community – are ideally placed.

By locating a school's fundraising and promotion within a social marketplace, where different charities and community groups co-operate but also compete for funding, pupils learn more about the wider world of charitable enterprise, as well as more closely engaging with particular charities, and this will enable them better to reflect upon questions of value and priority within society and their own lives.

## How does it fit into the curriculum?

Employers are continuing to complain that young people are lacking skills such as communication, applying basic numeracy and literacy and team working – crowdfunding is a great activity developing all these.

Pupils are able to apply their theoretical learning to a practical, real world experience. Working across the curriculum for Key Stages 3 and 4, crowdfunding develops





Over 100 schools, including President Kennedy, Coventry (pictured), recently funded new fruit orchards for their schools as part of the Fruitshare campaign, a joint project between [crowdfunder.co.uk](http://crowdfunder.co.uk), River Cottage, Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall and Channel 4

students' knowledge, skills, and understanding by connecting up various areas of learning. For example:

**LITERACY** – successful crowdfunding projects rely on explaining clearly what the project is all about, why the school is doing it, where the money will be spent, and what pledgers can expect to receive in return. This requires excellent written and oral communication skills for the online text and video, imaginative use of storytelling in putting together the story and engaging potential pledgers, and writing project updates.

**MATHEMATICS** – important skills are engaged in calculating the total amount to be raised, working out the costs of rewards, costing in contingencies, and managing risk and uncertainty. Crowdfunding also allows pupils to learn the importance of business planning, marketing and budgeting.

**CITIZENSHIP** – pupils can become actively engaged in problem solving, either within their own local community or one further afield focused on more global issues. This requires developing knowledge and skills, asking questions to develop a better understanding of the issues, and widening their understanding of local and global issues to enable them to decide on the focus and message of the campaign.

**ART & DESIGN** – successful crowdfunding needs effective use of imagery, and creative use of multimedia to tell a story and inspire support and action.

**COMPUTING** – the use of technology and social media is an intrinsic part of the crowdfunding process, and includes scheduling posts, using the online platform to create and edit the campaign, and video creation and editing.

**PSHE** – relevant activities include managing the risk of an 'all or nothing' campaign, working together as a team, learning about community engagement, and through the project and exposure to other campaigns, about the need



Archbishop Benson school, [crowdfunder.co.uk](http://crowdfunder.co.uk)



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Lorraine Allman is a speaker and writer who has over 15 years' experience running businesses, and supporting adults and young people to do the same. Her book 'Enterprising Child' – a practical guide to help parents develop entrepreneurial in their children aged 4 to 14 years – was published in 2012, and the web site ([enterprisingchild.com](http://enterprisingchild.com)) is a growing global source of information and inspiration. Lorraine is also a Crowdfunding coach and mum to the youngest successful Crowdfunder in the UK.

for community action and the challenges of community development to meet social needs.

Crowdfunding teaches pupils to follow through on their ideas, and to work hard at communicating their vision and inspiring others. There is no better example of this than the UK's youngest crowdfunder and Cleddau Reach VC Primary school pupil Dylan, aged 7, who wrote a 'Cracking Good Recipes' book to raise money for charity and successfully used crowdfunding to pay for the books to be printed. Crowdfunding offers a real life, practical experience, which will build and develop essential skills, and nurture a new generation of adults with a social conscience, confident and effective in securing the support of the crowd.

## 7 STEPS TO GET YOU STARTED

- 1** Decide on the campaign focus – will it be local, national, or international? Consider a project that links into particular themes being studied at that time in school e.g. environmental, poverty, or disability.
- 2** Choose your platform – there are many different options available, so take time to look through to find the right one for your campaign. Look at how many similar successful projects the platform has had, and the kind of support it provides project leaders.
- 3** Set financial targets – Pupils will need to list all the different expenses the campaign will incur, including costs of rewards, marketing materials etc. as well as crowdfunding platform fees (there is no charge to start a campaign but most platforms will charge a commission fee of around 5% of the total amount raised), plus contingency.
- 4** Plan the rewards – You'll need at least five that will appeal to a wide audience, and starting from as little as £1. Keep costs low – you don't want to be raising money where most of it goes on rewards you are giving back! Encourage pupils to think creatively and ensure the rewards have some alignment to the campaign. Rewards that become a 'talking point' can help increase pledges by offering 'money can't buy' rewards.
- 5** Prepare your pitch – A two to three minute video is essential for a successful crowdfunding campaign, as is clear, concise accompanying text on the project page. The pitch should include who you are, what you are doing, why you are doing it, the support you need, and brief details of rewards being offered.
- 6** Include PR – Crowdfunding gives schools the ability to reach out to new audiences; a good PR campaign is important. For example, Crowdfunder's Fruitshare campaign involved businesses such as Scoot, River Cottage, and Francis Clark, who supported schools by funding fruit trees. This is a win-win – schools secure the funds, and the businesses receive great PR in local newspapers.
- 7** Manage the process – once you have decided on a date for launch, there needs to be a plan of action for every day throughout the life of the campaign to ensure its success. Actions, along with who is responsible, will include social media updates, PR, emails and letters, and writing project updates. If you have enough pupils involved it's a good idea to split the group into small teams to take responsibility for particular action points to make sure everything is covered.