



WRC Case Study: Individual Donors

Interview with Emma Bell- Executive Director Jewish Women's Aid

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About Jewish Women's Aid

Jewish Women's Aid (JWA) became a registered charity in 1995, however they have been in existence since the late 1980s. In some senses JWA has always had individual donors/supporters as they were established by a group of Jewish women coming together to provide services around domestic violence for Jewish Women in England. JWA now provides a refuge for women, a helpline, community outreach and support services, an education and awareness programme in schools and a counselling service. See their website for more information www.jwa.org.uk

JWA has a Board of Trustees, an Executive Director, a staff team of 8 full time and the support of 120 active volunteers who help run the helpline, counselling service and the education programme in schools.

In 2010, the contributions from individual donors comes to about one third of JWA's revenue, with one third from statutory sources and the balance of one third from fundraising and events.

Successes and the Keys to these Successes

- JWA aim to keep their fundraising costs down and focus their expenditure on front line services- however they have recently invested in a fundraising database to ensure that the administration of the donor programme is well maintained. It is important to communicate with each individual donor in the way that they have identified suits them. JWA therefore does not send out 'mass mailings'. All communication goes out through the data base.

- JWA has a number of ways of raising money that involves current donors as well as aiming to attract new donations:
 - A fundraising appeal is run every November to coincide with the International Day to End Violence Against Women.
 - An annual women's only lunch is held in May.
 - There is an annual membership drive, and a newsletter is sent out twice a year, keeping donors up to date with the work of JWA.
 - A number of one off events such as a wine tasting, a business breakfast – it is important to pitch events that will appeal to the community you are targeting.
 - Awareness raising projects such as advertising and articles in the Jewish press twice a year can also attract new donors.
- The objective is to communicate with donors at regular intervals throughout the year and to have a balance between appealing to donors for financial contributions and organising events or providing information that are not directly focusing on raising money. For example a plan for a whisky-tasting, broadening the usual JWA target to include men, will not be primarily a fundraising event (though it may well encourage donations from those that attend.)
- The role of the Trustees is very important – it is critical to have Trustees who have contacts with current and potential donors in the community and who are confident in contacting and involving those contacts. JWA has a fundraising committee who work hard at organising events and obtaining sponsorship or in kind donations , for example the venue was donated for the business breakfast.
- The message given to donors about the work of the organisation is important – because the Jewish community is small, use of clients stories needs to be very sensitively managed. The message is intended to be factual and hard-hitting, but also to emphasise the positive outcome for women who engaged with JWA.
- Must do's /must haves for ensuring a successful individual donor programme:
 - Well organised and administered events (with good food!)
 - Personal contact / ongoing relationship with donors

- Well connected Trustees
- Up to date knowledge of the community you are targeting
- Well administered Gift Aid programme
- Ways to donate on the organisation website
- Administrative systems that meet the needs of the auditor and tax office

Challenges faced and lessons learnt

- While the benefit of donations is that they are unrestricted and have little if any reporting requirements (which can reduce the administrative load on a small charity), they are an uncertain funding stream – so it can be difficult to develop longer term plans on the basis of that income. Statutory income can provide more certainty (once the income has been obtained) as those grants can be over a number of years.
- The challenge is to understand the community of donors and to segment them into different patterns of donating so that fundraising is targeted more effectively. Strategic use of the information on the data base is very important. For example making sure that donors who have recently given are then not targeted for more support until an appropriate time has elapsed.
- An individual donor programme provides an organisation with valuable financial resources as well as an ongoing relationship with the community. The challenge is to develop innovative ways to communicate and develop relationships with donors. Competition for donations is high and organisations need to be continually focused on attracting and retaining donors.

Plans for the future

JWA plans to expand the numbers of donors, developing ways to make more use of individual contact, relationship building with major donors to encourage their ongoing support.