



## How donations can provide a predictable income for schools

(and what heads need to know about why development is so important post-pandemic)

Adapting to the rapidly changing market and developing a sustainable business model in the face of seemingly endless uncertainty is a challenge, even for the most experienced leaders – this is new territory for us all.

One thing that is certain, is that income from fees is likely to decline. Therefore, many schools, alongside cutting costs, will be focussing on adapting their business model and optimising income to ensure their school is sustainable.

### **Don't press pause on development: donations can provide stable and predictable levels of income for schools**

Donations can provide regular income to fund bursaries, hardship funds and boost pupil numbers. Fundraising is a team sport and there is an opportunity for heads to join in!

*'Even if some members of your development team have very understandably been furloughed, don't press pause on your development activity. Keep thinking of new ways of nurturing and building those relationships not just with alumni, but also parents – if you don't, you could lose out in the long run to other charities!'* Philip Britton, Headmaster, Bolton School

IDPE and Graham-Pelton's *Schools' Fundraising and Engagement Benchmarking Report 2018* reports that leadership involvement is critical to the success of your development programme.

*'The average gift size is three times greater in schools where the head spends 5% or more of their time on development related activities, for example championing the case for support and thanking donors.'* Jo Beckett, Joint CEO, IDPE

### **How can research inform your development strategy?**

[CAF's UK Giving 2009 report](#) explores the impact of the Global Financial Crisis on charitable donations. Even though donations declined by 11% overall, donor motivation remained constant.

The most cited reason for not giving was *'no longer feeling connected to the organisation'*.  
[CAF's UK Giving 2009 report](#)

## **What does this mean for your school?**

Now is the time for senior leadership and development teams to work together to protect and nurture their donations by reaching out to your school's community and involving them in your journey through the pandemic.

Pressing pause on your schools' development activities could set your school back in its fundraising journey and when we emerge, post-pandemic, your school could lose out on donations to other charities. Maybe there will be fewer donors who are giving less as a result of the pandemic, but they will still give! Education will still be front and centre in the minds of parents, grandparents and alumni, and the need for bursaries, or certainly hardship funds, will be even greater than before.

*'People will continue to give to schools post-pandemic, and philanthropic donations can provide stable and predictable levels of income for schools.'* Jo Beckett, Joint CEO, IDPE

Where there is challenge there is always opportunity – engaging your community now and keeping them close will not only mean your school continues to benefit from philanthropy, but will potentially move your school closer to its founding purpose and original charitable objects. For example, Latymer Upper School's original purpose was for the clothing and education of 'eight poore boys',

*'We have been, quite frankly, amazed by the generosity of our alumni, parents and donors during this crisis: they have made possible our work to support to the local community (e.g. PPE for the NHS and measures to tackle digital poverty) and raised significant funds both for short-term bursaries to help current families suffering the economic impact of the crisis, as well as long-term bursaries to allow us to continue to redress the disadvantage gap. The continuity of our development work has been invaluable in allowing us to stay true to our mission and purpose during this crisis and beyond.'* David Goodhew, Head, Latymer Upper School

## **It's free to access IDPE's specialist resources**

Whether you lead a fully functioning development team or some members of your development team have been furloughed, there are still things you and your senior leadership team can do to keep relationships with donors and prospective donors alive.

You can **access free guidance**, benchmarking and online webinars by contacting IDPE.



For a confidential conversation about your school please call us on 01225 829030 or email [info@idpe.org.uk](mailto:info@idpe.org.uk).

You can:

1. Request a copy of the latest IDPE and Graham-Pelton *Schools' Fundraising and Engagement Benchmarking report 2018*
2. Access IDPE's podcasts, webinars and guidance
3. Join IDPE Live – a series of free webinars and thought leadership discussion groups about development in schools

by emailing [info@idpe.org.uk](mailto:info@idpe.org.uk).