

Entering the EU funding matrix

While at a dinner with fellow fundraisers in England a year ago, the conversation invariably turned to the question of the intricacies involved in obtaining trust and statutory funding.

After much lively debate on the subject, I asked a colleague why no one had suggested applying to the European Union for funding. 'Oh no,' was the reply, 'It's much too complicated and most people haven't got the time or patience to try and work it out. It's like entering a matrix with no door.'

If Europeans view the EU as a large, unfriendly and often confusing institution how are South Africans expected to cope? And it isn't easy to negotiate a starting point in a body that represents 25 separate nations, and a host of different and often competing interests and institutions.

Ordinary people

Mark Watts, Associate Director at The Waterfront Consultancy, and former Member of the European Parliament, said – quite honestly – that bureaucrats are people with families and Labradors in the suburbs, and that institutions are collections of people who enjoy meeting and going for coffee.

'If you want to build relationships with EU officials and decision makers,' Mark said, 'take them for a coffee.'

Fundraising is often about developing relationships, and when looking at submitting an application for EU Funding, remember you're dealing with people and not amorphous institutions, and most importantly, with budgets that need to be spent.

So where does one begin to look for a practical starting point to obtaining funding? Crucially, the EU has a pot of money available to spend for each of its own policy sectors. Helping to identify which policy sector you fit into is a vital first step in finding out which funds might be available to you.

Are you a charity or NGO involved with environmental issues or the fight against HIV/Aids – and how? It's also important to bear in mind that whether funding programmes at home (within member states) or abroad (third countries) that funding always has a European dimension.

Criteria

Asking the question, does my application and sector fit in with the development and foreign policy goals of the EU, will save you a great deal of time and heartache.

Certainly, it would be foolhardy to embark on a six-month application process only to find that your work is not something that fits in with the EU's vision for itself.

A great place to begin this vital research before you launch into the application process, is to look at what grants have been handed out in the last year. And a good place to start learning about these issues is via the EU's official website: www.europa.eu.int.

Africa is now centre stage on the EU's funding agenda and a brief look at the website makes it plain that issues surrounding HIV/Aids prevention and treatment, poverty alleviation and other African development issues are very relevant to EU Foreign Policy at the moment.

A quick link via the main website to the DG Development website will tell you a great deal about the structure of funds available and what are currently relevant funding issues. The EU currently has several programmes where funds are made available to third countries, that is non-member state nations.

These are via the External Assistance programmes and the Participation of Third Countries in Community programmes.

Of these, the LIFE 3 Program which has a developmental/environmental bias, and the EDF External Assistance Programmes for Africa/Caribbean/Pacific, and the 9th European Development Fund are ones to watch.

Collectively these programmes have access to billions of Euros each year to fund projects and programmes that meet their funding criteria.

Minimum ask

Leave yourself at least six months to apply for a grant or funding and bear in mind that it's always important to 'dot the i's and cross the t's' in every application. Due to the time and work involved in making such an application, it's argued that applying for a minimum amount of R500 000 is advisable.

Remember that grant making bodies have a legal obligation to spend their allocated resources every year. A well put together application that meets the correct criteria, combined with a strategy to lobby the correct people within the EU body of your choosing, has every chance of being successful. ■

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Downes Murray International

Downes Murray International are fundraising consultants, working with non-profit and non-government organisations of all kinds, to increase their fundraising effectiveness.

We offer feasibility studies, strategic planning workshops, direct mail fundraising, mail/phone, corporate and capital fundraising campaigns, Internet fundraising and website design, church fundraising and bequest promotion programmes. In addition, Downes Murray International has close links with a number of fundraising consultancies across the globe, and represents DVA Navion International Consultancy in Africa, enabling us to keep a finger on the pulse of international trends and techniques. For more information contact your nearest office.

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Resolutions for 2006

With 2006 just around the corner, here's a checklist of 'must-do's' for your organisation, with acknowledgement to The Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership.

Season's Greetings

The editors, contributing writers and publishers of *Fundraising Forum* wish all clients and friends a merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.



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Make donating to your organisation a long-term relationship.

Make sure that between solicitations, donors are thanked for past gifts, receive updates on the use of previous gifts, and receive general information about the organisation: Being a donor should be an ongoing, not an episodic, relationship with your organisation.

Provide a full range of payment options for donors.

Allow donors to fulfil their pledges with cash, cheques, credit cards, debit cards, payroll deduction, and electronic transfer.

Embrace creative fundraising techniques.

Place a 'donate now' button on your website; form a strategic partnership with a business that shares your organisation's values; include workplace funding in your campaign; try grassroots givers like churches and service clubs; seek gifts in kind from retailers and manufacturers.

Create an endowment.

Endowments help to stabilise organisations by providing a steady stream of reliable income, in good times and in bad.

Hire the help that you need.

Complex fundraising instruments like capital campaigns and planned giving programmes are usually more successful when organisations seek professional help in creating and operating them.

Keep your promises, and demand that your donors keep their promises.

Always use donated funds for the purposes intended by the donor, and require donors to honour their pledges.

Prior planning positively prevents poor performance.

Any campaign requires meticulous planning prior to launching in order to be successful.

Keep meticulous records.

Every successful campaign is well documented, especially for legal and fiduciary reasons; documentation includes such things as expenses, donation amount, date donation was received, portion of donations that are tax deductible, and donor contact information. Set ambitious

and specific goals. Goals that are set high are excellent motivators, and they can always be modified if they are found to be set too high – or too low.

Organisations cannot live by gifts alone.

On average, earned income – fees for service, sale of products, royalties, etc. – provides nonprofit organisations with about half of their income.

Concentrate on individuals.

Corporations and foundations control substantial resources, but the sheer number of individuals makes them by far the largest source of funding – more than 80% – for nonprofit organisations.

Place your eggs in different baskets.

Just as your personal savings are safer if you invest in many different types of securities, your organisation is safer if you raise funds from many different sources, including individuals, corporations, and foundations; never depend on a single 'angel' to support your organisation.

Know your donor.

People give for different reasons, at different levels, in response to different needs and opportunities, so it is essential to know your organisation and to study its donors; also, do not be afraid to give donors different levels of recognition, depending on what they give.

Just as all politics is local, all fundraising is personal.

Donors, as a rule, do not so much give money to organisations, as they give money to people – people whom they know, trust and respect – which means that who does the asking is at least as important as the cause for which the funds are being raised.

Fundraising, like charity, begins at home.

It is vital to be able to demonstrate that all of your organisation's board members, officers, and volunteer fundraisers make significant gifts to your campaigns; what is considered to be a 'significant gift' will depend on the size and budget of an organisation. ■

With acknowledgement to The Non-profit Good Practice Guide (Visit www.npgoodpractice.org) of The Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership. You are invited to submit your good practice tips to www.npgoodpractice.org/participate.aspx

The secret to a great fundraising package:

Preparing a proper brief



Terry A Murray is former Chairman of Downes Murray International and recently retired president of DVA Navion South Africa.

By now your year-end festive season appeal should be produced and in the post – if not already in the hands of your donors and prospective donors.

But how well and how early did you brief your creative people and production suppliers or in-house team?

Timing your appeal is vital, but even more so at year-end – when donors are often in a more generous mood and almost every non-profit is seeking support.

So often the effort required to provide a strong, emotive theme, a good story illustrating your services and your needs, and quality pictures to add to the appeal – are all left to the last minute.

The result: rushed creative, too little time for proofing and refining the copy and package design – and even worse, a missed mailing date... all factors which

will adversely affect the income from what is surely the most important appeal of the year.

If your appeal is based on a year-end function like a kids' party or Christmas dinner for old folk, then there's an easy way to prepare for next year's appeal as well as getting some great stories for donor feedback in your newsletter.

Make sure that you note all the fine detail of this year's function, take great pictures of people enjoying themselves and get some good comments and quotes.

There's really no need to be one of the many organisations that provide inadequate and late creative briefs.

Steps

All that it takes is setting up a number of disciplines that are applied throughout the year. And, of course, you'll need a calendar of planned appeal mailings which is completed before the year starts, which clearly plots the actions required prior to the creative brief plus all the other deadlines to meet the mailing dates.

There are seven steps to setting up the necessary disciplines to ensure that your appeal mailing programme has effective, well-presented themes and always gets into the mail on time:

1. Prepare your full year's mailing programme with timelines from first briefing to mailing date.

2. Prepare a checklist of items required to brief your copywriter and designer. (Visit the

DMI website www.dmi.co.za for an example of a checklist.)

3. Call a meeting of key staff – especially the people involved in the delivery of your services – those at the coal-face. Show them an example of a really good mailing package with an emotive theme, great copy and illustrations and a strong 'ask'. Include an example of a donor newsletter that has all the right ingredients (use examples from other organisations if you don't yet have one of your own – or ask DMI for some winning examples).

Give your staff members the calendar and checklists and urge them to be on the lookout for stories, ideas and pictures for future appeals and newsletters.

Work smart

And most importantly, ask them to get comments from the people you are helping. This way you will already have some of your brief for next year in the bag.

4. Diarise to contact your team at least two weeks prior to each creative briefing deadline and remind them of what they have promised to do.

5. Make sure that you send everyone examples of every finished mailing so that they can see what they have helped to create – and share the results of your mailings

– in terms of response rates and money raised.

6. Keep abreast of new ideas and techniques by subscribing to fundraising publications – either printed ones like DMI's *Fundraising Forum*, or e-mail and on-line publications like Mal Warwick's Newsletter, *Successful Fundraising Online* (news@malwarwick.com) or *Canadian FundRaiser eNEWS* (circulation@canadianfundraiser.com).

7. Donate to other non-profits – particularly those who are providing similar services to your own. Use their mailings to draw comparisons with your own. You may even pick up some interesting new ideas.

Whilst all of this might look like quite a lot of initial effort – once these disciplines are in place, you'll be producing better, more effective appeals that are always on time – and you should begin to see improved results within the first 12 months.

My very best wishes to you for the coming season and for the New Year. May 2006 bring you more fundraising income, on-time appeal mailings and a happy copywriter and creative team. ■

“There's no need to be one of the organisations that provide inadequate and late creative briefs.”

and publications, without actually announcing a campaign. For example, a hospital that is renovating its emergency room should begin laying out to its constituency the plans and the value of the project.

Announcements

There should be no rush to make that public announcement. Public announcements generally fail to generate the kind of attraction that most people think.

Constituents' tolerance for long public phases of campaigns has diminished in the past decade, according to Hartsok. For a community of 300,000 to 1 million people, a public phase should not exceed six months to a year.

National and international organisations can conduct a two- or three-year public phase since their constituencies are not interacting with them every day, he added.

In each instance, a tentative deadline of when you want to announce the campaign should be set. For instance, the announcement for a two- or three-year community campaign should come anywhere from six months to a year from the end of the campaign, Hartsok said.

Most of Hartsok's clients have approximately 70% of their money raised before they go public. 'The goal ought to be – what is the dollar value of gifts that would give you confidence? If you read the textbooks, in some cases that's going to be 50%. I've come to prefer a higher percentage because I'm more concerned about what the remainder is. Have we used up all of our prospects to get to the 50%? If that's true, then having this goal of what you want to raise during the silent phase isn't a good strategy because you've already extended your campaign.'

Melody of money

The San Francisco Conservatory of Music did not decide on a silent phase goal when it began its \$65 million campaign, the largest in the organisation's history. The conservatory purchased a facility that had two buildings, one was historically significant and targeted for renovation while the second was to be demolished and rebuilt. Fundraising began in late 2000 to ensure the project's success.

'Conservatories aren't like the opera or ballet,' said Melissa Post, director of capital campaigns at the conservatory. 'It's an educational institution and not a performing arts center. They tend to be a little lower on people's radar screens. So it was important to get the word out that we are moving.'

The silent phase for the conservatory has comprised a leadership gifts phase as well as a major gifts phase, which is ongoing.

As of September 1, \$50 million has been raised in those two phases. Challenge grants have totaled \$25 million including \$10 million from an anonymous donor, \$3.5 million from individual donor Phyllis Wattis and \$3.5 million from the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation. The non-profit has met all of the challenge grants that it has received either on, or

ahead of schedule, according to Post.

Although the organisation has not yet unleashed its public phase for gifts, it has been in a public mode in describing what's been going on with the campaign. After all, a busy construction site tends to generate quite a bit of interest from the public.

'We expect the next part of the campaign to bring in a number of people who we haven't approached before because we were looking at higher level gifts,' Post said. 'We're currently in a suburban area and there's a tremendous amount of support for us to be in the civic center area. In already raising \$50 million, we think that will give people the confidence to continue to invest in the conservatory.'

Dancing to a different tune

The \$54 million capital campaign directed by the Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation, Inc. (AADF), was revealed to the public in a more brisk fashion. In the spring of 1999 the non-profit's board held a meeting and decided that it was going to buy a building to permanently house the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. From the spring to the fall of 1999 it conducted a feasibility study to get an idea of how much money it could raise. In the summer of 2000 it received its first leadership gift and has gone on to reap over \$72 million.

The AADF surpassed its goal by a wide margin, astonishing some since the September 11 terrorist attacks occurred during the organisation's silent phase.

'September 11 affected us greatly since our home is in New York City,' explained Sharon Gersten Luckman, executive director at AADF. 'We didn't stop the campaign. Much to our surprise, we got such positive feedback – 'Now more than ever you have to build this building and build it in New York City.' People were saying, 'We need to see Ailey this year. It's a very uplifting company.' It was obvious that we were important to the city.'

The silent phase of the 'A Soaring Spirit – The Campaign for Ailey' lasted a year-and-a-half. The organisation reached 66% of its campaign goal at the beginning of the public phase, which began with an announcement at the opening night of its theater season in the beginning of December 2001.

Endowment

The silent phase focused on the large, major, what we call leadership gifts, Gersten Luckman said. The AADF received gifts from New York, major grants, and plenty of gifts from the 'inner circle', which were mostly board members at the time.

In addition to a snappy new facility, all funds raised exceeding the \$54 million goal will be allocated to the organisation's first endowment.

'It was the first and obviously largest capital campaign for us,' Gersten Luckman said. 'We're calling it complete and we're calling it a success. Although what we've done is to continue to fundraise for the endowment.'

The 'silent' phase of a capital campaign is often referred to as the 'leadership' phase. During the silent phase the campaign aims to enlist the full support of the board, and top prospects. This early part of the campaign also aims to secure generous gifts from people who are already willing to support the campaign – creating a 'nucleus fund' with gifts from the silent phase.

Shhh! Be very, very silent . . .

We're hunting for capital

If you're planning a capital campaign, you'll have to decide on a goal for the 'silent phase' of the campaign, before making a public announcement. In this Special Report, Craig Causer reports on some current campaigns which are achieving – and exceeding – their goals in the United States.

When the Truman Medical Center Charitable Foundation (TMC) set out to conduct its current comprehensive capital campaign, it did so as a relative newbie.

The first and only capital campaign in its history had previously gathered \$20 million. Armed with that knowledge, the organisation set an initial goal of \$28.5 million and rapidly passed that figure in the silent phase of the campaign alone.

This past November, the non-profit's board voted to increase the goal to \$36.5 million. With the silent phase still ongoing, TMC has raised \$34 million and plans to re-evaluate its goal once again, this coming October.

'Nobody would've anticipated that we would do that well (raise the initial goal of \$28.5 million in the silent phase alone),' admitted Terry Snapp CFRE, executive director of the Kansas City-based foundation.

'What's astonishing is that we've had success relatively quickly so that we've had to adjust the goal. It was a goal that seemed reasonable at the time, since it was a higher number than the previous campaign had achieved. But our preliminary assessments and the feasibility study suggested that we could do better than that. I think our board felt more comfortable with the \$28.5 million figure.'

The campaign began in 2001 and the five-year effort is the first for Snapp with the organisation. The goal is to raise money for three categories, which is fairly typical for a comprehensive campaign, Snapp said. Some 60% of the goal will be allocated for various capital projects, programmes are slotted at 20% and the endowment fund is another 20%, he added.

During the silent phase TMC has made an effort to renew the donors who were part of the first campaign success. That category consisted predominantly of local foundations and companies, with some individuals. The second initiative was to broaden its base of donors and to concentrate specifically on seeking major gifts from individuals. For TMC, that was a new emphasis.

Snapp said that he found it very effective to use the organisation's board. As the silent phase was ongoing, TMC expanded its board, which has proven to be a good strategy to identify new donor prospects, Snapp added.

New prospects have been treated to individualised tours to meet TMC's chief executive officer and visit the hospital, particularly the projects the non-profit is attempting to fund. One significant example has been the expansion of its emergency room.

Visits are followed up with individually-tailored proposals.

TMC also tapped into the second of its two campuses to launch a distinct fundraising effort.

'One of our locations never had a fundraising initiative unique to its own campus,' Snapp explained. 'Now we have done that. We have blended in to this campaign, a major project at that campus. We have created a separate group of volunteers for the eastern part of the county for philanthropy. That has uncovered new prospects and broadened our database as well.'

Final goal

With only \$2.5 million to go until it reaches its increased goal, TMC will decide when to go public in November. Snapp said that he expects a consensus to agree upon early 2006. At the same time, the board will choose a final goal, which may be closer to \$40 million, Snapp predicted.

The organisation has been wise in prolonging its silent phases and holding off on a public announcement of the campaign. Had it gone public it might have had to settle for less money raised than what it has currently rung up.

Being the major public hospital for the Kansas City area, Snapp described as 'especially sweet' the silent phase's tally. 'Given that we're the main safety net and tax supported institution in town for healthcare makes it remarkable because we don't have a history of raising a lot of money. We have a relatively young philanthropic programme here and we didn't really raise money until about seven or eight years ago.'

Blinding me with silence

'I think the words 'silent phase' conjure up something that is at best inadequate, at worst, misleading,' said Bob Hartsook, chairman and chief executive officer at Hartsook Companies, Inc. in Wichita, Kansas. 'Unless they're sophisticated in capital campaign activities, they hear the words 'silent phase' and they think that they can't talk about their campaign. They can't talk about gifts. Everything has to be silent.'

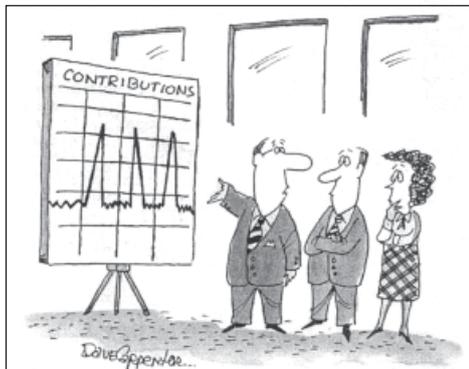
That concept is a real mistake, he said, 'because the value of the silent phase is to assemble the leadership gifts that are necessary to give your volunteers and staff confidence that the public phase of the campaign is going to be successful. It's good to talk about the projects in the campaign, celebrate the gifts as they come in and recognise the donors.'

Hartsook, who helped Truman Medical Center exceed its original campaign goal, advised non-profits to communicate its silent phase success by dripping information into materials

Continued on page 7

*Adapted from
The NonProfit Times
website
www.nptimes.com
October 1, 2005*

Milestone Thinking



'I'm not superstitious either, but those were the three days Harris wore his lucky socks.'

*With acknowledgement to
The Chronicle of Philanthropy*

Appreciation can make a day – even change a life. Your willingness to put it into words is all that is necessary.

Margaret Cousins, 1905

There's no question in my mind that speed in response is the most important characteristic of a gift acknowledgement.

*With acknowledgement to
Mal Warwick's website
www.malwarwick.com*

Save costs by printing all of your letterheads or a year's worth of reply envelopes at one time.

*With acknowledgement to
The NonProfit Times
September 15, 2003*

The first line of a fundraising letter is more than vital, it's crucial. The absolute rule is absolutely absolute: Fire your biggest gun first. This is the only time you're at point-blank range.

*With acknowledgement to
The NonProfit Times
September 15, 2005*

Sometimes rookie grant writers confuse *goals* and *objectives* in their proposals. Goals are overall statements of intent. Objectives are specific and measurable outcomes of activities.

*With acknowledgement to
Successful Fund Raising
February, 2004*



Educating for life

Education Alive has been working to reverse the downward spiral in education standards for more than 30 years.

To date, Education Alive has trained more than 30 000 teachers, and over 1,5 million school pupils.

The organisation aims to produce teachers who can inspire and motivate their pupils – and pupils who can achieve remarkable results and contribute to our economy.

And the outcome is overwhelmingly positive: dramatic increases in pass rates, a decrease in drop-out rates, improved entrepreneurial skills and innovativeness, critical thinking skills, clear understanding of subjects – and pupils who enjoy learning.

Education Alive adopts a holistic approach. It tackles the wider problems which teachers and their pupils face – not only in the classroom – but language barriers and social, moral and substance abuse issues. By training learners in common sense, morals and discipline they help to pave the way for lifelong learning to take place.

At the core of their training is L. Ron Hubbard's educational method – called Study Technology – which helps teachers to identify and handle students' learning problems. Study Technology also gives pupils the tools they need to read, teach themselves, understand and apply what they learn.

And the good news is that Study Technology is a skill which pupils can apply to all subjects and all areas of life.

(Readers are invited to submit photographs, together with a brief overview of their organisation's work, for inclusion in this regular feature.)

Teachers who can cope with a demanding system, and pupils who enjoy learning – two things Education Alive works to achieve in our classrooms.

FUNDRAISING FORUM

Fundraising Forum is a regular newsletter dedicated to the enhancement of management, fundraising techniques and the promotion of community service, welfare and not-for-profit organisations of all kinds.

It is published by Downes Murray International and circulated, free of charge, to anyone with an interest in the growth and improvement of the non-profit sector and those served by it. In addition to regular features written by Downes Murray International staff, there are extracts from worldwide fundraising publications which are reprinted with acknowledgement to the publishers.

We welcome submissions for publication from all writers involved in not-for-profit work.

Visit www.dmi.co.za

Corporate partnerships: How two organisations found their perfect match

Take a great idea, find the perfect corporate partner, and you have a winning recipe for success. Wildlands Conservation Trust recently joined forces with Moreland Developments in a partnership which benefits both organisations. Rory Wilkinson of Moreland Developments explains.

The Wildlands Conservation Trust's *Indigenous Trees for Life* project started as a simple idea. Most of the region's coastal communities live close to – or within – indigenous forests.

School children and their families are encouraged to collect and propagate seeds of indigenous trees, and the Wildlands Conservation Trust's *Indigenous Trees for Life* project then buys the seedlings.

The money the communities earn is used to pay school fees and cover other essential needs. The Trust then sells the trees to private nurseries, individuals and corporates. Moreland Developments (the property development arm of The Tongaat Hullett Group) has partnered with Unilever, and the Wildlands Conservation Trust, to establish a new project node in Waterloo, Umhlanga. Rory Wilkinson, Manager – Planning and SHE – at Moreland Developments discusses why Moreland became involved in the *Trees for Life* project.

'Moreland sees the Wildlands Conservation Trust as contributing, in a simple, meaningful and extremely material manner, to the lives of the poorest of the poor who have no real opportunities to empower or uplift themselves.

Wildlands's philosophy of targeting this vulnerable group, and in particular the youth, at the same time as making a significant positive impact on the environment, perfectly fits Moreland's perspective of what sustainable development is all about.

The identification of the Waterloo community (outside Umhlanga), meets Wildlands's criterion perfectly, and specifically as there is such a dearth of trees in the Waterloo area.

Waterloo is a community that sits at the centre of Moreland's future development growth path and thus has a key role to play as development unfolds in the region.

Moreland's mantra is about creating total living environments based on a philosophy of sustainable development and integrating communities in the

Whole communities – young and old – participate in the Trees for Life project.



With the money earned from selling indigenous trees, local communities pay school fees and cover other essential expenses.

creation of a healthy and green environment.

The powerful yet simple formula for Waterloo, is that the community will be growing indigenous trees (which are endemic to the region) from seed and will then be selling these trees to Moreland for its future developments, as well as to other developers, members of the public and the local authority.

Sustainability

The sustainability of the project is guaranteed upfront and meets both Moreland's demands for the right indigenous trees as well as providing valuable income for the community.

Moreland is especially excited about the simple long-term empowerment of the project potential due to its focus on youth and the lessons that the concept teaches such as responsibility, reward, benefits of honest hard work and education and awareness.

The potential is limitless and Wildlands has done a remarkable job of harnessing significant benefits and new meaningful 'rewards' in exchange for planting and growing indigenous trees.

Wildlands's success in Jobe and Khula visibly demonstrates the real potential of the concept and just what can be accomplished with the right attitude, drive and enthusiasm that the Wildlands team possesses.

Moreland is very excited about working with Unilever, Wildlands and the Waterloo community and looks forward to rolling out the concept in more areas. ■



Christmas bouquets for these winners

Judging by the quality of some of the fund-raising packs we've reviewed recently, it looks like it will be a bumper Christmas for several non-profits who've come up with innovative and appealing campaigns.

Achieving a unanimous 'thumbs up' from our panel were a pair of direct mail packs from St Luke's Hospice – both of which were extremely well conceived and executed.

Their annual Christmas tree light campaign was given a new spin with a set of charming angel gift cards, featuring children's art. The letter copy explains that the angels were drawn by the son and daughter of a terminally ill mother at the Hospice, and how much the lights on the tree will mean to them all this Christmas.

Although the reply form is a bulky A4 in size, and offers numerous options, it's simple enough to follow, and should have donors reaching for their pens and cheque books!

Personal

The organisation's previous appeal, sent out in August to mark their 25th Anniversary, comprised a personal letter from a woman whose father died at St Luke's Hospice when she was five years old, describing her grateful memories of the care he and the family had received.

Whoever wrote the copy did a brilliant job, and the entire pack – from the old typewriter font to the matching floral stationery of the envelope and letter – was cleverly designed to create an authentic and personal communication, further enhanced by the old family photograph clipped to the top of the letter.

Included in the pack was an anniversary bookmark, giving 25 reasons to support the organisation, and (the only element to draw criticism) a rather crowded reply form.

Birthday card

Further afield, we came across another winning concept from World Vision, New Zealand, aimed at existing child sponsors.

The colourful envelope carried the wording: 'Someone special is having a birthday'. Inside was a brief letter, reminding the donor that his or her sponsored child had a birthday coming up, and including a bright card with a New Zealand kiwi design for the donor to send to the child. This was the sole purpose of the pack, with no 'ask' whatsoever.

'Short and sweet' was the overall verdict of our panel – though some felt the card looked impersonal. Although aimed at existing monthly sponsors, we would still have taken the opportunity to solicit an extra 'birthday' gift, over and above the sponsorship.

A way to make print ads work?

As a general rule, newspaper advertising is not the most effective means of raising funds from individual donors. However, this advertisement for the Battersea Dogs and Cats Home in the UK had enough impact and appeal to challenge the precept.

Interestingly, it did not include the usual name and address coupon; instead, readers were invited to support the organisation by phone or SMS.

We wondered whether the ease and immediacy of the response mechanism might be the key to raising funds through general advertising; it would be very interesting to know the results of this campaign!

The year ends on a high note with these winning appeals, reviewed by Sheila McCallum.

