



Tool: Diversifying our fundraising options — Think outside the box

Note: This document is provided for information purposes only. Health professional associations making use of this resource should revise and modify it for use in their specific circumstances.

The following tool has been developed in the spirit of getting health professional associations to explore different options in order to diversify their funding base. It focuses on exploring other avenues for professional associations to raise funds other than international donor support. The ideas brought forward in the document are presented for discussion purposes and must be carefully considered by each association in light of their current needs, organisational capacities and the environment it functions within. Remember: working toward financial sustainability is a process, not an end; what is not possible this year may be possible next or the following years.

	Fundraising possibilities	Issues to consider	Way forward
Membership fees	Increasing membership fees	Increasing membership fees in any health professional association is never easy. As membership fees are closely linked to membership services/incentives, all increases must thus be carefully considered in light of the services provided.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and cost out services/incentives currently offered to members and consider developing a strategy that seeks, at a minimum, to recover some of these by increasing membership fees; • Promote the services/incentives offered to your members and potential members; • Ensure the services/incentives to members are of quality.
	Increasing proportion of members who pay their annual fees	Collecting annual membership fees is often very challenging for many associations. It is time- and resource-intensive and not always successful. It also requires the establishment of a basic membership data management system (manual or computerised), which needs to be updated continuously. Collecting annual membership fees is	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review data to obtain a better idea of the proportion of members who have paid their annual membership fees for the last five years. If the proportion is low, explore the reasons why (quality of services/incentives provided, poor or weak membership data management

		an issue that should concern the Board/Executive Committee as a whole, not only the person responsible for this task.	<p>system, etc.) and develop a strategy to address these issues;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a well designed annual membership renewal drive that is supported by the Board/Executive Committee; • Ensure all services/incentives available to members are provided to the members who have paid their membership fees.
	Increasing number of members	<p>Membership can be increased in a number of ways. It can include recruiting potential new members who fit your association’s membership eligibility criteria and who are currently not members or, again, changing the membership eligibility criteria to bring in new categories of members (i.e. an ob/gyn association who opens its membership to other health professionals practicing in ob/gyn). When expanding the membership categories, consideration should be given to establishing a membership fee schedule that recognises the varying income of different membership groups (e.g. having lower fees for midwives). In most associations, changes to the membership eligibility will require changes to the association’s constitution and/or statutes and by-laws.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review your membership data in light of the number of health professionals who meet the membership eligibility criteria of your association but who are not yet members. If this proportion is high, explore reasons why and develop a strategy to address this issue; • Explore pros and cons of opening membership to other allied health professionals; • Explore the option of having a membership fee schedule that recognises the varying incomes of your membership; • Develop and implement a strategy to widely promote your association to current and potential members.
Service fees	Continuing Medical Education (CME) activities/scientific congresses	<p>Increasingly, health professional associations are building credibility due to the quality of their CME activities and scientific congresses. Although these are at times supported by the industry, it is also possible for associations to use these to generate additional income for their association.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider instituting registration fees if your CME activities and/or scientific congresses are currently not supported in part by members via their membership fees; • Explore the possibility of instituting different registration fees for members

			and non members.
	Fees for services	Increasingly, health professional associations are also contributing to their government's efforts to improve the sexual and reproductive health outcomes of the population. In some countries, they are recruited as trainers or act as consultants or expert council. In many countries, these services are offered free of charge or at little cost with almost no financial return to the association.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost out, carefully, each of your training and/or consultancy activity and ensure an amount is included in the overall fee for administration/management costs (i.e. the acceptable rate is usually 10%-15%); • Ensure, if at all possible, costs are standardised for all activities and policies and procedures are developed in support of these (i.e. costs related to travel and other expenses should be the same for all activities run by the association).
	Other income-generating activities	Although these might vary considerably from association to association, health professional associations may also have the opportunity to consider other income-generating activities. These could include: renting or leasing out office or meeting space, providing administrative services for a fee (e.g. photocopying services, use of the Internet), etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be open to new and innovative opportunities that could lead to income-generating activities.
Pharmaceutical industry	Continuing Medical Education (CME) activities/scientific congresses	In most countries, health professional associations benefit from the support of pharmaceutical companies for CME activities and scientific congresses. The support provided by pharmaceutical companies varies from country to country, and may not always be the most beneficial to your association's current situation and needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate your current relationship with pharmaceutical companies and explore avenues for change that will support the generation of additional funds. For example, in a situation where a pharmaceutical company assumes specific costs related to a scientific event (e.g. expenses related to tea breaks and lunches), consider requesting an unrestricted educational grant for the activity which will permit the association to cover the expenses and redirect any

			<p>unused funds toward other activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See also page 16 of Toolkit: 'Focus: Good Practices when Working with Pharmaceutical Industry'.
	In-kind donations	<p>In some countries, pharmaceutical companies (and often other institutions) have provided support with donations of office or educational equipment, such as computers, televisions, projectors, etc. These donations can also contribute to an association's fundraising strategies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider in-kind donations in your strategy to diversify your funding. To maximise on this specific strategy, ensure that the equipment provided meets your need and is in good working order and that you will be able to maintain and/or repair it.