

FUNDRAISING FOR YOUR PEACE TRAVELS

*How You Can Raise the Funds You Need to Attend the War Resisters' International Conference
"Small Actions, Big Movements: The Continuum of Nonviolence" Cape Town, South Africa July 4-9, 2014*

You want to go to the War Resisters' Conference in South Africa this summer, but you're a hardworking peace activist, poorly paid and/or committed to simple living. How can you ever afford such a trip? Don't give up the dream! If this trip is politically and personally important for you and if you think it will be of value to your peace and justice community, you already have the most essential ingredients for successful fund raising: a clear goal, a passionate interest and an interested community.

Raising money for the trip will entail both practical and emotional hurdles but you'll also find it satisfying, heartening -- and even fun at times.

Here are some ideas and suggestions for raising funds to attend the WRI conference. Many of them are ideas tried and lessons learned by WRL members who attended previous War Resisters' International conferences.

WHY DO YOU WANT TO GO? WRITE IT DOWN.

Write a statement about why you want to go and why you think it's an important event. This will help you articulate your views and put your thoughts in order. Then you can use your statement when you write or speak to people about the trip.

- Why do you think this trip and this conference are important -- personally and politically?
- What are the conference details: title, location, time
- What is War Resisters' International?
- What kind of people will you meet there? What is on the conference agenda?
- Are you planning additional travel or specific visits related to social change?
- What do you plan to do as a result of the experience?
- How will you share what you learn from this trip with those who support you?

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST? WRITE IT DOWN.

Draw up a budget for your full trip. Estimate expenses for all your possible needs so you'll be sure to raise the money you need. Some expense items are obvious: transportation, conference costs, housing, and food. But you also want to include money for additional travel and cultural events. For example, if you're in Capetown, you'll want to go visit Robbin Island! You may also need money to use a local cybercafe or purchase a local phonecard. And don't forget the gifts: the ones you bring from the U.S. to give to local hosts and the ones you purchase to bring home.

WHERE DO YOU WANT THE FUNDS TO BE SENT?

Decide in advance about how you will accept funds. Your donors will have practical questions: Who do they make their checks out to? Can they make their donation online? If you want to raise funds through social media, you will need to be able to accept online donations. Set up a PayPal account or ask your local peace and justice group if they would accept earmarked donations through their online gift account.

CREATE A LIST OF POSSIBLE SUPPORTERS

Brainstorm: Sit down and do a brainstorming session with yourself. If you have a friend or set of friends to help you, invite them to join you.

Ask the Right Question: The question for your brainstorm session is Who has the capacity to make a financial contribution toward my trip? Don't ask "Who would or might make a contribution?" That slips you into pre-judging other people's choices. Let them decide. And remember that donations come in many sizes. The \$5 and \$10 donations are as important as the \$50 ones; they add up and they create the opportunity for more people to be invested in your experience.

Think Broadly: Think of people you know in all the different facets of your life: family; neighborhood; school friends; work colleagues; church members; other activists; Facebook friends and Twitter followers. Think geographically: people nearby; in other states; in other countries. Add people who are very interested in war resistance or South Africa, even if you only know them casually.

A FUND RAISING LETTER AND A FUND RAISING SCRIPT

You will probably want to send a letter to most of the people on your list, but a phone call might work better for some of them, and in some cases, a face-to-face conversation will feel the most natural.

Your donation letter should be short and to the point. Be clear that you are asking for money. Work from the statement you wrote. For a phone call, create a short script, or a list of the most important points before you call. If you send letters by post, add a handwritten note at the end. If you send letters by email, personalize the first paragraph. People are more likely to read something if they feel you're speaking personally to them.

You might want to ask people to consider making a loan. Before you enter into such an arrangement, however, think carefully about your capacity to pay it back within a reasonable period of time.

Be organized about your requests. Create a spreadsheet to keep track of people and their responses, noting if they have particular interests in some aspect of your trip.

WHY NOT HOLD AN EVENT!?

You can attract funds from a wider circle of people if you hold an event to raise funds. It could be a house party or an evening at a community space. Think about showing a movie about South Africa. Invite people for a South African dinner, movie and discussion. You might ask friends and family to help you organize it. At the event, you can tell people more about War Resisters' International and the conference, as well as your personal reasons for going. Set up an info table where you also sell items from the WRL Store, including WRL's new perpetual calendar.

Pacifeast Caterers can send you the menu and recipes for the South African meal they served at the WRL Peace Award Dinner in 2009 "Celebrating the Ongoing Struggle for Justice and Peace in Southern Africa." Contact them at wrlne@peoplepc.com, put "South African menu" in the subject line.

USING SOCIAL MEDIA

Crowdfunding: Besides the well-known ones like Indigogo, Fundly, GoFundMe, and Kickstarter, there are hundreds of crowdfunding sites including some that specialize in crowdfunding for extraordinary travel projects. Do some research: each site has different requirements and financial arrangements. No matter which you choose, you'll need to do lots of promotion.

Facebook: There's a Donation App which allows your friends to make donations without leaving your Facebook page. Facebook requires you to have a PayPal account for this.

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH YOUR SUPPORTERS

People enjoy getting something concrete as a result of their donation. They'll be looking forward to hearing from you when you get home. You can send strengthen their connection to your trip (and to you) if you send them email messages or Facebook updates or postcards while you are in South Africa. Bring back posters, peace buttons, or small gifts. When you get home, put the stories you bring back into a report that you distribute to each supporters. Invite your supporters to a presentation (with your photographs) when you get home.

BE CREATIVE: LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES BEFORE AND AFTER YOUR TRIP

Return with crafts from South Africa for a "Silent Auction". Have an event with South African food, a report and discussion what you learned at the conference and visiting South Africa.

Joanne Sheehan used a family reunion as a fundraising opportunity for her trip to a WRI meeting in Brazil. She designed a reunion t-shirt, had them made locally and sold them at the event. Her family members were happy to have a memento of the reunion but also know they were helping Joanne go to a A WRI Conference in Brazil.

Order buttons from www.donnelycolt.com and sell them at an upcoming rally. If there is a political concert coming up, set up a table with WRL lit, the perpetual calendar other items to sell such as buttons, stickers, whatever you think might sell and is not readily available in your community.

IT'S PERSONAL

Successful fund raising, like successful organizing, comes from building personal relationships. You are honoring people and your relationship with them, when you ask for their support. You enable them to be part of your experience and you give them the opportunity to be generous. Everyone wins and the the peace and justice movement grows.