

# Community Fundraising Handbook

**A GUIDE TO RAISING FUNDS IN YOUR COMMUNITY...  
TO HELP REFUGEES WORLDWIDE.**



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## COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING FOR UNHCR CANADA

### ***HOW CAN YOUR COMMUNITY GROUP HELP REFUGEES OVERSEAS?***

Refugees anywhere in the world are people like each of us. They live in a community of friends, family and social groups. Frequently, it is the strength of their community that allows them to survive.

This kit contains a series of suggestions on how you can enlist **your** community—friends, family, colleagues and others—to raise funds to support UNHCR’s work with refugees and other displaced people.

### **WHO IS UNHCR?**

UNHCR is the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, also known as the United Nations Refugee Agency. UNHCR has a specific mandate from the member countries of the United Nations to help refugees and other displaced people all over the world.

Refugees are people who are forced to flee their homes because of a well founded fear of persecution based upon their race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. There are approximately 10 million refugees in the world. There are an equal number of people who are in need of UNHCR assistance who are not strictly defined as refugees, including those who have no nationality (stateless people), former refugees who are returning to their home country (returnees), and many who fear persecution but are unable to leave their country (internally displaced persons).

UNHCR provides those in need with humanitarian assistance—food, shelter, water, sanitation, and basic medical care. As an international agency, we also protect and advocate for the legal rights of refugees and other persecuted individuals.

### ***FUNDING CRISIS***

In order to meet the needs of over 21 million people, UNHCR asks for financial support from governments, corporations, foundations, individuals and community groups worldwide. The majority of our programs are supported by voluntary contributions from governments, but our goal is to raise 10% of our total budget from other sources, including donations from individuals all over the world.

Each year UNHCR has to make difficult financial choices, as we do not have enough money to do all that needs to be done. There are many people who need assistance who have to accept scaled down efforts when the money is not available. This is a difficult

situation to accept, when we know what we need to do, but just can't do it—at least not without your help.

### ***WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT CAN UNHCR OFFER ME IF I ORGANIZE A FUNDRAISING ACTIVITY IN MY COMMUNITY?***

UNHCR wants to spend as much money as possible on programs directly helping refugees and others in need. Consequently, we have limited financial resources to offer to individuals and community groups to pay for fundraising activities. Instead, we recommend designing your fundraising activity to pay for itself, with any extra funds being sent as a donation to UNHCR.

Although we can't offer financial support, we do produce publicity materials, including videos, posters, newsletters and other items that we would be pleased to provide to support your fundraising activities. There is a list of materials you can request from us at the end of this handbook. We can also advertise your event on our website.

Moreover, if you require assistance with media relations, fundraising procedures (especially if you would like to arrange to have tax receipts sent to those involved in your fundraising activity), or you have questions about the work of UNHCR, you can always call our office toll free at 1-877-232-0909 ext 300 or by e-mail at [withyou@unhcr.ca](mailto:withyou@unhcr.ca).

### ***IDEAS TO CONSIDER***

In the following pages there are a number of fundraising ideas that you can use to raise funds in your community. Some of the ideas are for a single person to encourage donations from their friends, family, neighbors or colleagues, while others are designed for your group—church, Scout or Guide troop, classroom, office, service club or sports team—to do together. Some of these ideas are designed for a group of people to work together.

Each activity is described in some detail, with suggestions on common pitfalls to avoid, time and financial investment required, and possible variations on similar themes.

You are never alone when developing your fundraising activity for UNHCR. At the bottom of each page is our toll free number for you to call if you'd like to discuss your own idea with us, or if you'd like some help or guidance.

If you have a fundraising idea for your community that is not included in this collection, please let us know and we will share your idea with others who may be able to do the same activity in another part of the country.

Community fundraising is vital for UNHCR. Not only will extra funds be used to help more people, but community events help to inform Canadians about the conditions and challenges that refugees and other persecuted people face all over the world.

**Thank you for helping the UN Refugee Agency help refugees and others in need.**

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## PLEDGE EVENT (A *SOMETHING-A-THON*)

### *Summary:*

Any event in which participants collect pledges from individuals, based upon the premise that the participant will complete some sort of task (run a certain distance, fast for a day, cycle across the country, etc.).

### *Expected Investment:*

Generally, there is a cost to run the event and this cost can be quite high. For large multi-year events, the first year may only raise enough money to cover the costs. For smaller, single year events, organizers might expect to spend \$1.00 to raise \$2.00.

Participants have to be treated as VIP's, as they are the people who are actually doing the fundraising by collecting pledges. Sometimes, prizes are given to those who surpass benchmark pledge amounts—generally the prize is valued at no more than 10% of the benchmark, and prizes are often donated.

These sort of events require quite a bit of time to prepare, as participants need to be recruited (by phone, word of mouth, flyers, or advertising) and then they need time to raise pledges. The day (week or month) of the event, when all participants are completing their task often requires a number of volunteers who need to be recruited or trained. This doesn't necessarily require a lot of money, but it does take time, as the professionalism and enthusiasm of the volunteers really affects the experience for the participants and will affect the success of repeating this sort of event.

### *Expected Revenue (after expenses):*

These sorts of fundraisers when run well, generally raise about twice as much as they cost.

### *Possible Timeline:*

For a small event, where a group might hope to raise \$1000 or less through the efforts of a handful of participants, plan to have at least two months to organize. Larger events, where there may be 100's of participants and revenues of (hundreds of) thousands of dollars require up to a year of preparation time and a series of committed volunteers to coordinate planning and activities.

### *Variations:*

- Invite corporate “teams” to participate and challenge each team to raise more money than their competitors. Consider having a prize for the team that raises the most pledges.
- Read-a-thons (great for school based fundraising)
- Consider making the task one that is useful in the community—picking up garbage, or removing graffiti.

## *Common Pitfalls to Avoid:*

- Sometimes the “task” requires local permits that might take time to acquire (especially true for sporting events like bike rides/runs)
- Try to have all participants get the money when they ask for pledges, not after the event
- Do not plan to contact the donors on behalf of the participants after the event.
- Be sure to have all donors (pledges) give their complete mailing address, in order to have UNHCR be able to send them a thank you and a tax receipt
- Remember that your participants need to enjoy themselves, as they have to be “rewarded” for having been the fundraisers who have asked for pledges.

## **PUBLIC SPEAKER/PRESENTATION**

### *Summary:*

Create a community awareness event featuring either a high profile guest, or a credible guest (like a refugee or someone who has worked or volunteered overseas with refugees). The event should be introduced as a fundraising event, and when the speaker(s) are thanked at the end, the audience should be reminded how their donations can make a difference to address the issues mentioned in the talk.

### *Expected Investment:*

A small token gift for the speaker (can be a cash honorarium if the speaker is a high profile individual), room rental if appropriate, and advertising for public events. Generally, these sorts of events are inexpensive to organize, with an investment of only \$20-50 dollars that can be recouped from donation proceeds.

### *Expected Revenue (after expenses):*

Revenue can be minimal if the “hat” is passed around the audience, or can be more lucrative if tickets are sold and other events (auctions, donation challenges, etc) are incorporated. As a general rule, the more eminent the speaker, the higher the ticket price, ranging from a few dollars (for student events) to as much as \$100 for an international figure.

### *Possible Timeline:*

Can be organized in as little as three weeks, depending on the access to an audience, the speaker’s availability and the venue. If the audience is a church group or a service club like Rotary, then the event can be organized quite quickly as both the audience and the venue are guaranteed. If the event is for the general public in a community auditorium, then time must be allowed for advertising and for ticket sales (if appropriate)

### *Variations:*

- Single speaker or panel discussion—for a good panel discussion, both “sides” should be represented.
- Slide shows—pictures are worth a thousand words, but the slide show has to be short and well edited.
- Live entertainment, either music or dance, often creates a festive atmosphere for this sort of educational effort.

### *Common Pitfalls to Avoid*

- A tax receipt can not be issued for the value of the admission, and will not be made for cash donations made into a donation box (or “hat”)
- Be sure to identify how UNHCR is addressing the challenges that may be part of the speech.

- Have materials available for people to take home and be sure to give everyone an addressed envelope and donation coupon as they leave.(UNHCR can supply these items at no charge with a week's advance notice)

## SALE OF GOODS/SERVICES

### *Summary:*

This sort of fundraising is like running a small business enterprise and donating the “profit” to UNHCR. The small business may be very small, like a lemonade stand, or it could be building deck chairs in retirement for all your friends, or it could be running a full time not-for profit business (like a thrift shop). Of course most people work to make money for themselves, but donating that profit to UNHCR offers a tax receipt to the donor/entrepreneur and is a great marketing tool. (People like to know their purchase is going to support a good cause.)

### *Expected Investment:*

Depends entirely on the scope of the activity. Garage sales might only require \$10 worth of signage and coffee, with total sales in excess of \$300. With volunteer labour, this sort of activity requires minimal investment. However, if you begin a lawn cutting business for a summer (even with volunteer labour) there will be expenses for gas, oil, machinery, and repairs.

### *Expected Revenue (after expenses):*

Again, this depends on the scope of the activity. With a weekend single occurrence activity (like a bake sale or a pancake breakfast), \$300-\$400 after expenses would be considered very successful.

### *Possible Timeline:*

Planning should occur not less than 3 weeks in advance of the event, longer if the activity will last over a span of time. (A business plan is recommended if the activity is to become a permanent endeavor!)

### *Variations:*

Garage sale, plant sale, carwash, house-painting, bazaar, caroling, haircutting, making birdhouses, selling a cookbook of favorite recipes, buying broken goods to repair and resell, babysitting, dog-walking, teaching/training, etc

### *Common Pitfalls:*

- The bigger the investment, the bigger the risk. Running a business, whether small or large, requires commitment to see returns on the initial investment (just ask any child operating a lemonade stand!)
- Those purchasing the goods or services DO NOT get a tax receipt. (only if they make an outright gift!)
- Don't underestimate the cost of advertising and promotion. For some service-related activities, advertising might be the only cost, but it will make or break the success of the event.
- Make sure that you pay your expenses first, then donate the remainder to UNHCR.

## PER HEAD FUNDRAISING

### *Summary:*

Ask everyone you know to give a small amount--\$1.00, for example. This works well if you belong to a membership-based organization like a service club or a union. Most people won't balk at giving a "loonie" or a "twonie" and this can raise quite a bit of money in an afternoon. This is also a tremendous way to increase awareness about the work of UNHCR and the plight of refugees.

### *Expected Investment:*

This is an easy fundraiser, requiring nothing more than time and a willingness to ask for a donation, and to answer questions on the work of UNHCR.

### *Expected Revenue (after expenses):*

It is easy to raise \$200-\$300, perhaps more, depending on how much you ask of each person.

### *Possible Timeline:*

Can be spontaneously organized at a party, a social gathering, or in the workplace, but it works best if there is some planning, to at least be able to answer potential questions from donors.

### *Variations:*

- Give something to each donor for their dollar—a sticker, or a piece of paper with basic facts on UNHCR (available from UNHCR)
- Suggest that everyone in your office empty the change out of their pockets after going for lunch, or for coffee.
- Buy a box of donut holes, bring them to the office, and then sell them for a \$1.00 each, calling it a "sugar tax"

### *Common Pitfalls to Avoid:*

- Give people a way to say no—if someone is struggling for money, this sort of fundraising can make them feel very awkward.
- The donations are not eligible for a tax receipt, unless someone wants to make a gift of \$10 or more, at which time it is important to get that donor's full name and address (including postal code) and return that information to UNHCR when the donations are submitted.

## GALA EVENING/COCKTAIL PARTY

### *Summary:*

This is a fundraising event that relies on selling tickets to make money. Generally, there is some sort of attraction (guest speaker, opportunity to meet someone famous, social networking opportunity, musical performer, etc) or game (casino night, auction, raffle, etc) or exclusive venue although these “hooks” are not obligatory for success. Invitations are sent to an audience of likely attendees (usually people who have a bit of disposable income) It is preferred if the price of admission is collected in advance of the evening (that way, sickness or inclement weather won’t reduce the revenue at the time of the reception). Generally these are fancy affairs where the guests are treated like VIPs, with a served dinner, or catered hors d’oeuvres. The price of a ticket should be set based upon the level of services offered. It is not uncommon to sell tickets at \$100 per person, with 40% being tax creditable<sup>1</sup>.

### *Expected Investment:*

Between 40-60% of the ticket price per person. (i.e. for a party of 75 at \$100/ticket, the cost of putting on the event might be \$2000-3000 (although some of the costs might be donated if enough planning is involved)

### *Expected Revenue (after expenses):*

40-50% of the ticket price multiplied by the number of guests in attendance. With the scenario of 75 guests at \$100/ticket, the total donation to UNHCR after all costs have been covered might be \$3500.

### *Possible Timeline:*

Plan at least two months in advance, longer for a more elaborate/ritzy/formal function

### *Variations:*

- “No show” gala—where invitations are sent to NOT come to a gala, and people pay for the privilege of absence. This works well if your guest list is tired of these events but would like to support your cause nonetheless. (for the No Show Gala, 100% of the “ticket” price can be receipted)
- Raffles, auctions or sales can be part of the activities, in order to raise extra money from the assembled guests.

### *Common Pitfalls to Avoid:*

- Although tremendously enjoyable, these events generally cost a lot to put on, and require a good network of people willing to purchase the tickets at whatever price is set. Moreover, this is a glorified dinner party, and therefore takes careful (and sometime laborious) planning.

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<sup>1</sup> Please refer to the section at the end of this handbook on Fundraising Procedures

- Considerations: parking/valet service, wheelchair accessible, available seating for older guests, wine spill contingency planning, coat and umbrella check, timing of event to ensure the least competition (re: other major long standing events in town)
- The success of this event relies ENTIRELY on the guest list—leave enough time to call people and invite them personally if numbers of ticket sales are low.

## AUCTION

### *Summary:*

This fundraising event can take many forms, but in any case it relies on the ability to auction off goods or services (known as “lots”) to a group of willing purchasers. The auction can take place as part of a larger function like a dinner gala or a church pancake breakfast. The items on auction are normally donated in order to make the greatest possible revenue for donation. Enlisting a local celebrity auctioneer can often help to increase attendance.

### *Expected Investment:*

This can be an inexpensive way to add value to another event, as the investment is almost always time: time to get donated lots, time to invite people, and time to ensure that there are volunteers to help with banking and spotting bidders.

### *Expected Revenue (after expenses):*

This type of fundraising can be very lucrative, as most of the costs are in volunteer time. A simple services auction might raise \$300-500 in a few hours. A more complicated auction with a professional auctioneer and viewing times for items might raise several thousand, depending on the excitement of the audience and the quality of the auction lots.

### *Possible Timeline:*

In most cases, a live auction might require at least a month to get the selection of items for bid, invite bidders, arrange for an auctioneer, and book a location. A silent auction can take very little time and can be done by mail, or by email with a website featuring the items for bid.

### *Variations:*

- **Silent Auction:** a popular variation, where people view the items for auction and they make a pledge on a piece of paper located near the item. The bidders circulate and see the bids already made and if they want to win, they must outbid the last written bid. After a set amount of time, the bidding closes and the last name on each list “wins” the item.
- **Online auction:** consider selling an item on Ebay and donating the proceeds to UNHCR. (In this case, you can get a tax receipt for the amount you give to UNHCR)
- **Services auction:** Many people find it easier to invite members of their community to donate services rather than goods. Services might include be a “home cooked meal” (you’d be surprised how much a single person might pay!) or “leaf raking services” or “a painted portrait” or “two hours of handyman time.” If you belong to a service club, then members of that club might be willing to offer their services to each other. The auction then, becomes a game to raise money in a creative way. This is a very popular fundraiser in churches and other community gatherings.

## *Common Pitfalls to Avoid:*

- Be sure to have the auction items either confirmed in writing or at the event. There is nothing more embarrassing than having a winning bid for an item or service that never materializes.
- Banking is important in these auctions, as it is frequently difficult to locate the bidders after they have made the final bid. Some will issue bidders a “number card” which identifies them. In other cases, volunteers can go and find the successful bidder in the crowd immediately after the winning bid. Of course this problem is alleviated in the silent auction, as the name of the donor (and their telephone number) is included as part of their bid.
- When soliciting “lots” for bid, ask the donors to help you develop a special “portfolio” to show off the item. This will help raise the bids. If people do not know what they are bidding for, they will likely underbid.
- Consider setting a “minimum bid” for items for which you’ve had to pay something to get them (ie make sure that you at least recoup your costs) or to ensure that a \$100 item doesn’t go for a song—the donor of that item will not be impressed if their donated item doesn’t raise any money for the cause.
- It is important to note that bidders do **not** get a tax receipt, as they are in effect “buying” the good or service. However, the donors of the items for auction (not the services) are eligible for a tax receipt in some cases. For information on how to get a tax receipt to these donors, contact UNHCR.

## LOTTERY/RAFFLE/50-50 DRAW

### *Summary:*

As with an auction, this activity requires a prize, and a certain level of organization. However, it does not necessarily rely on an assembled audience, as tickets can be sold over time by mail, in person or by email. In a lottery or raffle, then individuals buy tickets in the expectation that they might win the prize. This can be part of another event, even an existing event.

### *Expected Investment:*

This requires time to acquire the prize. As with an auction, the prize can be a donated item or service, or it could be a cash prize. Other than getting the prize, then the investment will typically be small (less than \$30) for stamps, printing or purchase of tickets, and administering the process.

### *Expected Revenue (after expenses):*

Again, it depends on the prize. Big lotteries, to win a “Dream Home” for example, can raise hundreds of thousands of dollars, when the tickets are \$100 each. However, for most community-based lotteries, one can expect to sell tickets for \$2-\$5 each (or discounts for multiples). Simply put, the more effort is put into ticket sales the greater the revenue. Total revenue, therefore, might be \$200-\$1000 depending on the prize and the ticket price.

### *Possible Timeline:*

In its simplest form, a 50-50 draw or an auction can be organized on the spot. At one community fundraiser, for example, the “special guest” (an actor) became so compelled by the speeches that he created an *impromptu* auction to sell his necktie to the highest bidder. For more complicated versions, the time required to prepare is more or less the same as the time required to acquire the prizes.

### *Variations:*

For a 50-50 draw there is no set prize. In this variation, after all tickets are sold, one ticket is drawn and the winner gets half the amount collected. This is an easy way to make money, as almost everyone with a small urge to gamble will pay for a ticket for a chance to win “half the pot.”

*Common Pitfalls to Avoid:*

- As with an auction, be sure to have the prize confirmed before any tickets are sold.
- For larger raffles/lotteries, some provinces require a license in order to protect the public from fraud. In most cases, a local raffle will not be of concern and there is no set rule to determine at what point a license must be acquired. Generally, if the prizes are worth less than \$10,000, then there should be no need for a license. When in doubt, contact UNHCR and we'll call the gaming commission in your province for clarification.

## POTLUCK SUPPER

### *Summary:*

This is like the gala event, except that it takes less time to arrange, and can be done quite casually amongst friends. Revenue can be made using one of the party activities (auction, raffle, 50-50 draw, etc) or can also be generated by having each person pay an entrance fee for the pleasure of trying someone else's dish. This is a great opportunity to "pass the hat" after dinner, especially if there is some sort of public awareness activity built into the evening (video, speaker, or question and answer period)

### *Expected Investment:*

Everyone must bring a dish, including the host. Otherwise, the investment is mostly in cleaning up afterwards.

### *Expected Revenue (after expenses):*

This activity does not have a huge revenue potential, but it is fun, accessible for a lot of people of any age or social status, and has the benefit of creating awareness about UNHCR. Total revenue might be \$100-200 for this activity.

### *Possible Timeline:*

This activity can be organized easily in a few days. If support is needed from UNHCR for educational materials, then please allow one week for shipping these goods at the cheapest possible rate.

### *Variations:*

- This event is like any other house party. Games, special speeches, announcements, and other activities can help create a special evening.
- You can always "sell" the recipes for those who really love a specific dish or two.
- Cookie and recipe exchanges have become quite popular, this can be turned into a fundraiser.

### *Common Pitfalls to Avoid:*

- Try to ensure that everyone understands how valuable this sort of social event can be for refugees when everyone makes a small contribution. Having said that, there are very few pitfalls for this sort of activity.

## Sports Tournament

### *Summary:*

Golf tournaments have brought this fundraising activity to the forefront, although the same model could apply to any sporting event. In essence, this is fundraising event in which participants come out in a festive atmosphere to play a sport and money is raised for a charity. The revenue can come from entrance fees, corporate sponsorship, sale of food or drink, and in some cases raising pledges.

### *Expected Investment:*

There may be some rental costs for facilities, and there have to be prizes for the participants for “best ball,” “most sportsmanlike,” or other such praise. Each participant should be considered a VIP and this treatment might require a budget of \$10-30 per person. This investment will increase if participants are served a meal at the end of the event.

### *Expected Revenue (after expenses):*

First, participants will pay an entrance fee to play and this fee pays for all expenses of running the tournament, with any excess being the foundation of the donation to UNHCR. Participants can also gather pledges to participate further increasing potential revenue. Often there is a BBQ or sale of drinks and profits from these sales can add to the donation. Generally, there is a token “participation” prize given to each person who participates. If corporate sponsorship can be organized to pay for the out of pocket costs, then the donation further increases. It is a good policy to plan for a 200% return on investment. Therefore, if it costs \$20 per participant, then the revenue should be not less than \$40. Using this ratio, then revenue can be quite substantial (\$1000’s) for a fancy event (thus golf tournaments) or can be more reasonable (\$100’s) for a community ball game.

### *Possible Timeline:*

Allow for at least two months to organize any sort of fundraising sport event. If corporate sponsors are to be approached add another 1-2 months.

### *Variations:*

- Golf, softball, ultimate, soccer, swim meet.
- Team challenge. In many cases, with enough planning, you can arrange to have team “compete” with each other prior to the event by raising more money than the other. This is common in any pledge driven event (see section on “Something-a-thon”)
- To really make money in this sort of fundraising activity, acquiring some sort of sponsor to help cover the costs in return for some good publicity in the community is a prudent activity.
- Consider a “unique venue” where participants would normally not be able to play that sport.

- Enlist celebrity participants or a team and advertise this when marketing your event
- Hold other activities for spectators and participants while they are not playing, this will help to keep people on the event grounds for other fundraising activities. In addition to attracting spectators to the event.

*Common Pitfalls to Avoid:*

- Have a contingency plan for rain.
- Try to collect as many pledges before the event as possible.
- Remember that each participant, or TEAM of participants have to have a good time. Sometimes this will require you to organize some entertainment, or generate some excitement during the event.
- Also consider adding to this event an auction, or a raffle if time permits. Generally, people who have had a good day will be inclined to give a bit more to support UNHCR.

## **THEATRE/CONCERT BENEFIT**

### *Summary:*

Encourage a local music or theatre group to donate their services for an evening. Many community theatres will allow a worthwhile cause like UNHCR to sell tickets to a dress rehearsal (or pre-show) to create an audience to perform the work before the regular run. Likewise, many local musicians are looking for a place to play, and will gladly perform for free if they are able to get the exposure at no cost to them.

### *Expected Investment:*

You'll need to do a bit of research and solicit the support of the performers or the performance hall. There may also be a down payment or a small fee required. Sale of tickets should be no less than the value of the down payment (or payment for utilities), just to ensure that if something unforeseen happens, then you will not be out of pocket.

### *Expected Revenue (after expenses):*

This can be a very rewarding endeavor. The audience gets a night out and the charity and the performers get the exposure they want. Depending on the size of the performance hall, revenue might be \$500 or more after all expenses.

### *Possible Timeline:*

Make sure that you leave enough time to sell tickets in advance. Also, if capitalizing on the generosity of the community theatre, the performance time will likely be set well in advance (and typically for a weeknight, which means that you'll have to give your attendees time to organize their schedule to be free that evening). For a benefit concert of this magnitude, plan to spend no less than 1 ½ months in preparation.

### *Variations:*

- Add an auction item or two either in the lobby during intermission (silent auction) or on stage, if the performers are willing to help out as auctioneers.
- Consider a post-performance wine and cheese or social event with the performers. This may require further permissions and the agreement of the performers, but such a post performance party will allow for a much higher price to be charged for tickets.

### *Common Pitfalls to Avoid:*

- Note that if the event is a concert, there may be noise bylaws to consider in some neighborhoods.
- If you plan to sell alcoholic beverages, this may require a permit.
- Don't rely on ticket sales at the door. These last minute sales are only extra (welcomed) revenue.
- Again, as the patrons are getting something for their ticket price, there are no tax receipts issued. In this case, the donated talent is also not eligible for a tax receipt, as it would be very difficult to put a price on the value of their performance.

## DANCE

### *Summary:*

As with the concert/benefit, this is a night out for donors. In its most basic form, this is like a High School dance in which there is a fee for admission and all proceeds collected pay for the costs of the gym, the band or DJ, and the residual amount goes to UNHCR. However, this need not be only for high school students. Legions do this sort of fundraiser regularly. More revenue can be made if there is a small markup on the bar or food served.

### *Expected Investment:*

You can expect to pay for the rental of the venue, lights, sound equipment (sometimes the band will include this in their fee) and of course the band or DJ. You should plan to have these costs covered by ticket sales.

### *Expected Revenue (after expenses):*

This depends on the scope of the activity and the “cachet” of the performer. If you have a local band playing for teens, ticket prices might be \$20 and the band may charge \$400 for the night. If the audience is 100, then you might expect to make a donation to UNHCR for \$1500 after expenses. For a swing orchestra at a fancy ballroom, ticket prices might be \$60 per person and the band might charge \$1200 or more. Revenue for 100 in this case might then be \$4000, depending on the costs of renting the ballroom.

### *Possible Timeline:*

Again, allow plenty of time—months—to advertise the event and generate enthusiasm. Also, there may be some time required to acquire a license to serve alcohol, if this is appropriate.

### *Variations:*

- Theme dances. A 50’s night to celebrate an anniversary, for example.

### *Common Pitfalls to Avoid:*

- This sort of event suffers terribly from poor attendance, as the out of pocket costs remain and there is little more pathetic than a dance hall, a band playing and only a handful of people hugging the walls. Make sure that ticket sales are strong, and negotiate a “cut off date” with the performers to get your initial deposit back. If it looks like it is going to be poorly attended, cancel as soon as possible and keep your losses to a minimum.

## E-CARDS/PERSONAL NOTES TO FRIENDS AND FAMILY

### *Summary:*

Each year, you (or your company) may send greeting cards to your friends, family or business associates during the holiday season, or to mark a special occasion or annual meeting. Consider asking UNHCR to create an electronic e-card for you, complete with a beautiful photograph of a refugee or refugee family. UNHCR will create the electronic greeting at not cost and will email it to you. You can make a gift to UNHCR for the value of the cards and postage you would have spent if you had send real cards. You may also ask those who receive the e-card to consider making a gift to UNHCR (with an online link to our secure online donation page even) to either match your contribution, or to give whatever they can afford.

All contributions from this activity are 100% eligible for a tax receipt.

### *Expected Investment:*

Nothing but time.

### *Expected Revenue (after expenses):*

For a small business, sending e-cards might save you \$500, while for an individuals, the value of your mailing might be only \$50-\$100. However, if you ask each of the recipients for a gift, then donations received by UNHCR might be four times the investment. If you elect to make a gift on their behalf, then the donation is whatever you'd like to give (and it would be fully eligible for a tax receipt)

### *Possible Timeline:*

Ask UNHCR to design an electronic card at least two weeks before you'd like to send it.

### *Variations:*

- Include a donation form with a printed card and a short note describing how much refugees need our help. (or direct recipients to our website to make a gift online)
- Suggest that rather than getting a gift on your birthday or anniversary, you'd like most to have your friends/family/colleagues make a donation to UNHCR in your name.
- This may also be an appropriate thought to include in wedding or shower invitations "in lieu of gifts" or in memoriam announcements, "in lieu of flowers."

### *Common Pitfalls to Avoid:*

- As with any other fundraiser involving friends and family, be sure to offer them a way to say "no" without feeling they've been cornered.
- In a corporate environment, it is very unusual to ask the recipient to make a gift. Rather, it is typical to make a gift on "behalf of" those to whom you are sending greetings.

## **BINGO/CASINO NIGHT**

### *Summary:*

Bingo has been a staple fundraising activity for many years at the community level. In fact, many cities have privately run (and government regulated) bingo halls or casinos which raise money in part for charity. In your community, this is a relatively enjoyable social activity in which bingo cards are sold and a percentage of the sale of those cards is available to be won. In many ways, this is like a 50-50 draw as each pot is eventually won and the size of the pot is dependent on the number of players. In the casino option, guests can pay for admission to the casino, and can purchase “chips” and play one of a number of casino games: blackjack, craps, roulette, poker.

### *Expected Investment:*

There will be a cost for bingo cards and “stamps”. These are often available at stationary supply stores. This may not exceed \$50, depending on how many cards you are expecting to sell. Likewise, you’ll have to have some means of generating the numbers (either using a ball machine, or numbers in a hat, or a computer to randomly generate the bingo letters and numbers.) In the casino option, there may be some costs for chips, a portable roulette wheel, or a felt for craps.

### *Expected Revenue:*

For Bingo, you can expect to make a gift to UNHCR for half of the pot, less expenses. Thus revenue can go from \$50-\$1000, depending on the scope of the activity. For casino’s the revenue can be greater, as there is no guarantee that anyone will win...in fact the odds are that the only winner will be UNHCR.

### *Possible Timeline:*

A bingo or a casino can be a part of another social event, and as such it can be organized within a week. As a separate event, it is like any social in that there should be at least one month allowed to invite people to attend.

### *Variations:*

- There can be special prize rounds, where an extra prize is available for the players (in order to generate more activity or sell more bingo cards.)
- Don’t forget that food and drinks can be sold to the players and the profit can further increase the amount of the final donation to UNHCR.

### *Common Pitfalls to Avoid:*

- This donation is not tax deductible, as the source of the money is actually from the players, who have paid for their cards.
- This is considered gambling. You may need to get a gaming license if you are encouraging the general public to play.
- If you are running a casino, it is preferable to have volunteers who actually know the games, and can run them seamlessly.

## THE FOOD FAIR/BEER OR WINE TASTING

### *Summary:*

This is an event which can be done privately in a person's home, in which case it is very similar to a potluck dinner or a gala. Conversely, it can be a public event, where chefs or *sommeliers* donate their time and the general public pay an admission to taste the delicacies prepared by different connoisseurs.

### *Expected Investment:*

The "at home" version can require the costs of preparing different foods, or buying different wines or beer. The public event will cost more, including advertising, and perhaps a room or restaurant rental.

### *Expected Revenue (after expenses):*

Depending upon ticket prices, this sort of event can raise between \$100 and \$1000 dollars for UNHCR. The bigger (and more public the event) the more risk and the more the potential reward.

### *Possible Timeline:*

Again, if this is run privately for friends or colleagues, it can be organized and executed within a few weeks. If it is a public, high profile event, then several months or more will be required to secure the voluntary support of chefs, restaurants, or other professionals to make this a success.

### *Variations:*

- This event is very common to support the arts, as it is often held either before or after a performance on stage. For this reason, it might be a good event to combine with a theatre/concert benefit as described earlier.
- Auctions of some of the recipes, or the cook's donated implements, or a special bottle of wine can create more revenue out of this event, and the attendees will be delighted.

### *Common Pitfalls to Avoid:*

- Don't make this too big an event immediately. Start small and if ticket sales continue to increase, then you can always add more chefs to the program afterwards, as a bonus.
- This sort of event, if enjoyable for the attendees, can easily become a yearly occasion, but don't plan for this until the first event is over and is a clear success.

## UNHCR MATERIALS AVAILABLE

If you need information or publicity materials to support your fundraising activities, contact the UNHCR Fundraiser in Canada, Jonathan Wade, toll free at 1-800-232-0909 ext 300 or by email at [withyou@unhcr.ca](mailto:withyou@unhcr.ca).

If there is something that is not on the list below that can easily be produced then please let us know and we'll try our best to provide supporting materials.

**Frequently Asked Questions**—a small brochure featuring basic information on UNHCR

**Donor Newsletter**—a colorful, newsy document describing current UNHCR projects.

**Donation Forms**—either pre-printed or sent by email to be printed by you, these forms make it easy for people to make a donation, and ensures that UNHCR can issue tax receipts to donors when appropriate.

**Business Reply Envelopes**—Postage paid envelopes that allow donors to send UNHCR a donation directly.

**Posters**—a variety of colorful posters to be used as decorations at an event, to liven up a presentation, or to give away as prizes.

**Powerpoint Presentation**—if you would like to speak about the challenges faced by refugees, and the work UNHCR is doing to help, this presentation can be sent by either email or on CDROM. Please allow a few weeks to prepare this presentation to best suit your needs.

**Country Information**—UNHCR has detailed up-to-date information on our programs available by country or by region. Please ask if you'd like to address the challenges of a specific population.

**Videos**—a selection of videos available for loan. Please contact us for titles.

**Speaking Notes**—available online at <http://www.unhcr.ca/events.htm> or by contacting UNHCR directly.

## FUNDRAISING ETHICS

UNHCR is committed to remain accountable to all of our donors, from governments to individuals, as our work relies on retaining the donor's trust.

Although it is not imperative to subscribe to a formal code of ethics when helping UNHCR raise funds in your community, it is important to remember that UNHCR works on behalf of individuals who frequently have little or no voice of their own as a result of circumstances beyond their control. We believe that as advocates for refugees and other displaced people, it is important to portray them with dignity and honesty, and without judgement to protect their individual beliefs, aspirations and strengths.

## FUNDRAISING PROCEDURES

When organizing a fundraising event for UNHCR, one of the first questions you may have relates to the issuance of tax receipts to donors. UNHCR is able to issue receipts that can be used by donors as a credit on their Canadian income tax return. However, UNHCR is not a charity; as a UN agency, we are referred to as a “Qualified Donee” by the Canadian Revenue Agency. This status allows us to issue tax receipts, but means that we do not have a “Charitable Registration Number” in Canada despite the charitable nature of our work overseas. (see: <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tax/charities/policy/csp/csp-q01-e.html>)

Volunteers are not permitted to issue tax receipts on behalf of UNHCR. This function can only be done by senior UNHCR staff.

It is important to remember that tax receipts are only issued to donors who make a contribution voluntarily for which they expect to receive no goods or services in return. For this reason, the value of a tax receipt issued to a donor relates to the amount they have given to UNHCR as a gift.

For example, if a person purchases a ticket in a raffle, they do not receive a tax receipt, as the ticket is purchasing a “chance to win” much like any provincial lottery ticket. Similarly, if a person purchases a ticket to a gala event for \$100, and for that ticket they receive a meal and a glass of wine that is worth \$60, the tax receipt can only be issued for \$40 (even if the meal and wine are donated—it is the “fair market” value of the good or service that determines the donated portion.) Proper back up documentation is required.

Although these Canadian Revenue Agency rules may seem restrictive when organizing a fundraising event for UNHCR, the truth is that most donors place very little value on a tax receipt, particularly if they believe in the cause. However, if you feel that offering a tax receipt will increase donations to UNHCR during your fundraising activity, please contact our office to discuss how best to issue receipts.

## NOTES:

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