

How to Engage Your Friends and School + How to Deal with the Challenges Along the Way

By Kate McEvilly

1) Form a diverse coalition

- Find people with different strengths.
- Look at recruiting people from different grades, cliques, etc.
- Get uncomfortable. You might find allies in places you never would have expected.
- You cannot do this alone. Creating a successful club, group, non-profit, etc. is not possible without the support of a community. Do not be afraid to lean on your team to make things happen. In my experience, the end result is better when you work together.

2) Give people specific jobs

- This is great incentive for people to commit and get the benefit of being able to add something specific and leadership orientated to his/her/their resume.
- Assigning people specific jobs also helps people to feel responsible and connected.
- Possible job categories could include Marketing Guru, Financial Analyst, Fundraising Specialist, Head of a Specific Campaign, Leader of Out of School Outreach, etc.

3) Come up with tangible goals

- Create a schedule and stick to it.
- Come up with both short-term and long-term goals.
- Don't just think about fundraising goals but also set goals about raising awareness and building connections.
- Do you want to collaborate with other clubs or groups? How many members do you want to have by the end of the semester? How many fundraisers are you hoping to have? Do you want to host an assembly or a discussion to talk about your cause?

4) Be prepared to get creative

- If your school has restrictions on the number of fundraisers you are allowed to have a year, how can you stretch that to be most effective? Can you host one continuous fundraiser over the course of a week? Can you do an on-campus fundraiser and then host an event off-campus at a restaurant, park, or friend's house?
- How does the pandemic affect your ability to both collaborate with your members, raise awareness, and raise money? Could you collaborate with a local elementary school and host online reading circles? Could you host an online Netflix party and

charge a small entry fee via PayPal or Venmo? Can you still hold weekly online meetings with members? Get creative, but make sure you're operating within your school's rules!

5) Use history and get intersectional

- Whether your cause is drilling clean water wells to empower girls like Wells Bring Hope or something else entirely, read into the history of your cause. Understanding history is power. It will help you make more convincing arguments to potential donors and help encourage people to join your cause. Understand your organization's history, your cause's history, and the complex conditions that created the problem in the first place.
- Resist the urge to ignore complexity. When I went to college, I learned more about colonization. This informs how I think about Wells Bring Hope's mission now. West Africa's colonization by the French created a lot of the economic and political instability that makes them the poorest country on earth today. Their natural resources were plundered. Their government's sovereignty was hijacked, and they then became governed by military rule. Empowering women in West Africa for me is not motivated by a call of white saviorism but rather a call to advocate for basic human rights and human dignity to try to combat the lingering effects of colonialism. Putting women in leadership positions, specifically in the government, will not only boost women's rights but is also predicted to minimize conflicts and lead to more economic opportunity long term. Education is the basis of girls getting to dream big and create the lives they want to live. Drilling clean water wells makes it possible for girls to go to school. It makes it possible for girls to take control of their own lives and make a difference in their communities. Don't forget about how religion, gender identity, sexuality, etc. all interplay in nuanced situations.
- Keep up on current events so you know what's happening in West Africa, what's happening in sub-Saharan region, and what major innovations are happening in the world of engineering and drilling of clean water wells. This helps me feel confident speaking about Wells Bring Hope and the importance of their mission because I am keeping current and informed.

Final Words of Wisdom:

Be prepared to fail, make mistakes, and hear no. This does not mean you are failing. Be open to feedback. Lean on your team, and keep going.