

**Fundraising Guide**

VSO Ireland

**2017**



## Fundraising guide for departing VSO Ireland Volunteers

VSO Ireland  
7 Whitefriars, Aungier Street Dublin 2  
+353-01-640-1060

*Above photo: Children in Thyolo district, Malawi*



***Congratulations on being selected as a VSO Volunteer!*** From everyone at VSO Ireland, you are sincerely welcome to the VSO community. You are now part of a network of hundreds of Volunteers who are committed to using their skills and expertise to fight poverty and injustice around the world. Wherever you find yourself in your Volunteer journey, we are very grateful for your commitment so far and are delighted to welcome you on board as a VSO Volunteer.

*There is a lot to consider as you prepare to go overseas, and fundraising may seem like a daunting prospect. However, with some planning and creativity your target of €1,500 is very achievable and you will also have some fun along the way! This pack will provide you with some ideas and tips to help you get started, and VSO will also be there to support you along the way as you work towards your target. If you want to talk through some fundraising ideas, share something that has worked really well, collect some fundraising resources or just generally have a chat about fundraising, you can contact Tiernan in the VSO office on 01-640 1076 or [tiernan.reilly@vso.ie](mailto:tiernan.reilly@vso.ie)*

**Before we get started, here are some questions that you might have about fundraising:**

**Q. I'm already giving my time as a volunteer, I don't understand why I have to fundraise as well?**

We appreciate that VSO Volunteers demonstrate a huge commitment in their decision to Volunteer, and that they give so generously of their time and skills. There is, however, a cost associated with placing Volunteers overseas. VSO covers almost all your costs as a volunteer, including flights, immunisation, accommodation and placement, as well as a monthly allowance. This can cost up to €21,000 per Volunteer. Funding is vital to enable us to continue to send Volunteers overseas to share their skills and expertise with our partners around the world, in the communities where they can make the greatest impact. The €1,500 raised by each departing Volunteer is essential to ensure the continuation and sustainability of VSO's work. It is important for all NGOs to have a broad and diverse funding base to ensure sustainability and Volunteer fundraising is an essential part of this for VSO. As well as this, fundraising events are a great way to raise VSO's public profile. Our Volunteers are our best ambassadors – just think about all of the people in your networks who might come to a fundraising event and will therefore find out more about VSO. Now think about all the people in their networks and imagine how many people you can inform about VSO through just one event!

**Q. What resources can VSO provide to support me in my fundraising?**

VSO have a wide variety of resources available; t-shirts, collection buckets, sponsorship cards, posters etc. We can also assist with the process of obtaining a Garda permit (if one is necessary for your chosen event).

**Q. Where does the money I fundraise go? Does it go directly to the partner I will be working with overseas?**

VSO is an international development charity working with partners in 24 countries. VSO's mission is to bring people together to fight poverty, and we are the leading international development agency working through Volunteers. That is why all funds raised go towards enabling VSO to continue to send Volunteers to share their skills and empower communities in the fight against poverty.

Giving funds directly to partner organisations creates an expectation that the Volunteer will be able to continue to provide funds for the duration of their placement, and can result in an unequal power relationship between you and your counterparts. It also sets expectations that any future Volunteers will also provide funds.

When you fundraise as a VSO Volunteer using the VSO brand, the message you are sending to the public is that the funds raised are for VSO. Diverting funds elsewhere could be misleading for donors and supporters. Clear messaging and transparency is vital in all fundraising activities and is something that VSO takes very seriously. See page 9 and page 11 for more information on VSO and how to communicate about the work you will do as a VSO Volunteer and why you are fundraising. If you have any questions or queries about this, please do get in contact with us.

### **Q. How soon should I begin fundraising?**

Experience has shown us that getting started early is the key to success! There will be many competing priorities as you prepare to go overseas, with work, family and logistical and personal preparation. So getting your fundraising plan in place and acting on it as soon as possible will mean that you won't have to think about fundraising in those hectic few weeks before you depart for placement.

### **Q. I haven't told anyone at work that I'm leaving so I'm worried about starting fundraising.**

Don't worry! Think about other networks that you have outside of work, through friends and family, clubs and societies.

### **Q. Can I cover the cost of my flights and medical expenses in lieu of fundraising?**

VSO has access to charity rates on international flights and works with a travel partner to ensure the best rate. The medical costs can differ from Volunteer to Volunteer depending on placement country, and these are reimbursed to each Volunteer by VSO Ireland. It is not possible for this expense to be released from its budget line and transferred to fundraising. This is in line with transparency and fundraising best practice. Therefore we ask that all Volunteers follow the established procedures for reimbursement of their medical expenses and treat their fundraising as a separate undertaking.

**Hopefully this has answered some of your questions. Now read on for some great tips on how to get your fundraising underway.....**

## 5 steps for fundraising

Here are the 5 steps to follow to get you on your way with meeting your fundraising target

- 1) Start Early
- 2) Think about your networks
- 3) Plan an event that will work for you and your networks
- 4) Spread the word
- 5) Lodge your funds



*Dr Mary McAuley, VSO Volunteer (bottom right) and colleagues who fundraised with her in the Belfast Marathon*

### Starting early

As we mentioned under the FAQs, starting early is a key to success! Time will go by very quickly as you get everything ready to go overseas, and while it might feel like you have lots of time, it is best to get started early so that you can enjoy the time immediately before departure with your friends and family.

### Think about your networks

Think about the networks available to you. These might include:

- Work colleagues
- Family
- Your local church
- A club, group or society in which you are involved
- Friends
- Your former secondary or primary school
- Your local community and neighbours

#### Top tip!

**Think about the timing of your event. Ensure it does not clash with a major local or national event, like a football match. Generally, holding an event early in the month after people have been paid works well!**

Using the networks available to you is a key to success, both in terms of organising an event and spreading the word. Below are some ideas on how to use your networks to support you in your fundraising:

- Hold a coffee morning in your workplace and ask everyone to make a donation for tea and cake – you would be surprised how well this works!
- Leave a donation bucket in the canteen or some other public area in your work place
- Contact your local church about holding a church gate collection

- Ask your local school if they will hold a non-uniform day for you
- Hold a coffee morning or dinner party for your neighbours and friends
- Ask friends and family to join you in a sponsored event and collect sponsorship on your behalf



*Niamh Quinn, a VSO Education Volunteer with her supporters during her Fun Run in Co.Clare. Through the Fun Run and Mycharity.ie, Niamh raised €2,300!*

## Plan an event that will work for you and your networks:

Once you have thought about your networks, decide on an event that will work best for you. Some key questions to ask yourself in planning your events are:

- What will the event be?
- Where will you hold it?
- When will you hold it?
- How much do you hope to raise from this event?
- What is your target for attendees?
- Do you need a permit or licence for the event?
- How will you spread the word?

**See the template on Page 14 to help you map out the answers to the above questions!**

Here are some tips for organising your fundraising event:

- Keep it small and **manageable**. Organising a big event like a ball or a fashion show can generate a lot of stress, cost a lot of money and not generate matching funds. Events like coffee mornings, bake sales, raffles, church gate collections and table quizzes are not as demanding to organise and are very effective at raising funds. Sometimes the simplest ideas are the most effective!
- Do you need a **venue** for your event? Some events, like a sponsored walk or a pre-organised event such as a marathon or Fun Run do not require a venue. If you do require a venue, can you get the room for free in a local pub or sports club? Think about how many people you want to attend the event and make sure your venue is the right size.
- Think about how you can **make the most of your event**; include a raffle or a silent auction. A raffle at a table quiz can bring in a few extra hundred euro!
- If you need **prizes** for your event, approach local shops, businesses and hotels about donating prizes. Having one or two big prizes, like a night away in a hotel, can really increase ticket sales for a raffle.

**Top tip!**  
**Ask if your local bakery will donate leftover cakes for your bake sale!**

- Collections in public places, such as on-street collections require a Garda permit or local council licence. Check page 13 of this manual for more information.
- Think about what will appeal to the people in your network e.g. if you are a member of a golf club, holding a Golf Classic might be a good idea. If you are a teacher, consider holding a concert or bake sale in your school. If you are a member of a local church, perhaps you could hold a church gate collection or hold a bake sale in the parish hall. If your friends love Father Ted, why not hold a Father Ted themed table quiz! The possibilities are endless!!
- Make sure you are **safe and legal**. You might need a permit or licence for certain events – see page 13 for more information. Consider any health and safety requirements of your event and your venue.

## Spread the Word

The next step to running a successful event is spreading the word!

- ✓ Create a Facebook event and invite all of your friends, and ask your friends to invite their friends!
- ✓ Contact your local paper and radio station about spreading the word about your event
- ✓ VSO can support you in designing a poster which you can display in your workplace, sports club etc
- ✓ Ask each of your friends and family who are coming to your event to bring along 3 of their friends – that will really increase the numbers!
- ✓ If you are holding an event through your local church, ask if you can announce your event to the parishioners in the church or through the newsletter
- ✓ Be sure to let VSO know about your event so that we can promote it on our website and social network sites
- ✓ See page 9 for information on how to set up a fundraising page on Mycharity.ie

### Get FUNdraising!

Here are some events which have worked well for Volunteers in the past

- ❖ Ask friends to sponsor a day of your placement for €10 per day – a one year placement would raise a whopping €3,650!
- ❖ Bake sale
- ❖ Table quiz & raffle
- ❖ Church gate collection
- ❖ An auction of promises – get your friends to offer their skills and expertise as prizes!
- ❖ Sponsored walk/Fun Run/Cycle
- ❖ Themed dinner party

### Fundraising resources available from VSO Ireland

- Collection buckets
- Tshirts
- Posters
- Balloons
- Sponsorship forms
- Sponsorship letters

If you need any fundraising materials, get in contact with Tiernan on 01-640 1076 or [tiernan.reilly@vso.ie](mailto:tiernan.reilly@vso.ie).



## Lodge your funds

**Congratulations!** You have reached your target! The next step is to lodge your funds to VSO. You can do this either by posting a cheque to VSO Ireland, 7 Whitefriars, Aungier Street, Dublin 2, or by lodging the funds directly to VSO at any AIB branch.

Please do let us know when you are planning to lodge your funds, and be sure that your **name is included as a narrative** on the lodgement slip so that we know where the funds have come from.

### **VSO's bank details are as follows:**

Bank Account Name: VSO Ireland  
Bank Account Address: AIB, Dame Street, Dublin 2, Ireland  
Bank BIC No: AIBKIE2D  
Bank IBAN No: IE66 AIBK 9320 8602 7333 85

As well as lodging your funds, there are a few other steps to follow after your event

- ✓ Give yourself a big pat on the back!
- ✓ Let VSO know how the event went and send us some photos if you can
- ✓ Thank your supporters, including anyone who helped with the organisation of the event, the venue, anyone who donated prizes and everyone who came along to the event.
- ✓ If you have fundraising buckets, please return them to the VSO office as soon as possible



## **This is how Ciara Ormond set about raising over €6,000 for VSO Ireland before departing for her education placement in Ghana in September 2013.**

When I cast my mind back as far as last Christmas when I seriously started looking into volunteer organisations, VSO Ireland stood apart for many reasons. I was instantly drawn to their overall ethos, the structure of their plans for volunteers and also their stance on fundraising. Fast track on a couple of months, after interviews, assessments, medicals and many vaccinations I received my placement confirmation in July. That left me with two months to try fundraise; in between reorganising and planning for a year away from my life as I know it! VSO have a suggested target of 1,500 for all volunteers intending to travel. What was so important to me was this was not a compulsory target and if I didn't reach it then my plan to travel with VSO was not impeded in any way. This was a huge bonus for me, I instantly felt no pressure to get large sums of money together from my friends, family and community who have supported me so often in the past in funding other ventures.

Teaching colleagues of mine had kindly offered to run some funding ventures during the academic year with their C.S.P.E. classes, while I would be away. I was confident that I would raise some funds for VSO but I was not confident of raising anywhere close to the target of € 1,500 in the short time I had before leaving. By the time July came round my focus was very much on getting ready to go overseas, I was so swamped with online courses, SKWID training in Birmingham etc that time was definitely not on my side! Several attempts were made by both my friends and family to organise a night of sorts to highlight VSO and raise some funds. I avoided this as best I could, I was adamant I didn't want a 'going-away party' and in such a short timeframe I knew any night organised in the weeks leading up to departure was going to be exactly that!

One Thursday night I was out with friends and cousins and my incredibly persuasive friend convinced me that I was missing out on a great opportunity. Her enthusiasm was infectious to say the least and in a matter of minutes she had the pub booked! They immediately offered free food on the night and also offered to organise a popular local band. So by closing time on that Thursday night the wheels were set in motion for a Benefit Night to be held 8 days later! What happened next I could never have anticipated in my wildest dreams. The following morning, before 11am, I was driving to Omagh when my friend called. She had posters made, an announcement gone into the Parish Newsletter and surrounding Parishes for that Sunday and had also contacted local radio. The following Monday, my friend approached local businesses in the town for spot prizes for a raffle on the night. The response was incredible, 28 prizes were donated and each one raised the profile of the draw on the night. Two great friends rowed in instantly and left nothing to chance on the night. They all spread the word and the response was phenomenal. Suddenly I was receiving post from people far and wide with substantial contributions. Neighbours, family, friends I hadn't met in years were calling with gifts, cards and donations. On the morning before the Benefit Night, I dashed to the bank hoping to get my errands completed in 20 minutes. One hour forty-five minutes later, I hadn't managed to walk the 100 yards from the Bank to my car. I was inundated with well wishers, wanting to hear of my plans and I loved talking about it to each and every single person that would listen. In that few short steps I received a further € 300, I was and remain to be so touched by the generosity of my community.

The night itself was a massive success. It was physically supported by so many on the night and it was lovely to see so many people. The raffle alone raised over €2,000 and individual contributions raised a further € 1,300 on the night. It was mind-bending. Over the course of the weeks before and after the night almost another €2,500 flowed in. I was shocked and thrilled beyond words. Thanks to the efforts of my friends the night was kept as simple as possible! They also made sure the entire community knew I was travelling to Ghana. Their enthusiasm and commitment had an indescribably positive impact on my fundraising. Local businesses were so generous and willing to support the Benefit night and the rest came down to the overwhelming support from the ordinary folk in my





everyday life, my family, my friends, my colleagues, my neighbours, the clubs and organisations I am involved with in Templemore – they all came out in support.

I may have received a lot of funds on behalf of VSO but what came to me in kindness, goodwill, generosity and support is impossible to quantify. My whole trip took on a completely different dimension, the endless teas & coffees, cakes and biscuits that were shared at the kitchen table late into the night right up to my departure gave me an indescribable feeling. The genuine interest that everyone had in my new life venture is amazing. I benefited a million times more in the abundance of friendship than VSO Ireland have with the contributions I received on their behalf. I will always be so grateful to everyone who supported me, and particularly to my friends and family who gave me the gentle push I needed in the right direction.

My advice to new volunteers is not to allow yourself to become overwhelmed by the fundraising aspect of your journey. I got huge support and ideas from the VSO office in Dublin so the possibilities are endless. There are so many ways to raise funds and awareness at the same time. Put a little thought into what suits your own circumstances; I knew I would get support for a low-key informal venture in my locality, it's what my community does best, I honestly didn't anticipate just how well they did it!! When people offer to help you with your fundraising, gratefully accept that help and support their ideas in whatever way you can. If somebody is kind enough to offer their time for you when they know what they are doing, and their time is precious; accept it and respect it. I hope your journey is as positive as mine, on the days when life is tough in Ghana I recall the endless support I have at home... and I look forward to my 'Welcome Home' party!!!!!!

## Fundraising Online

Fundraising online is a really simple and effective way to promote your event and to access your networks all over the world. It is easy, hassle free and can give a real boost to your fundraising efforts

VSO has teamed up with the Irish online fundraising service Altruism.ie, unlike other platforms altruism takes 0% fees for donations which mean VSO gets the most from the money you raise. It uses a simple step-by-step method that allows you to create a web page about you, your activity, and the work of VSO. You can include a photo, an online sponsorship form and a calculator to keep track of progress. Every time someone donates through your Altruism.ie page it goes straight to VSO, without any further action needed from you.

**Top tip!**

**Before you create your Mycharity page, search for other VSO Volunteers and see what has been working well for them**

One of the best things about using Altruism.ie is that people all over the country and all over the world who may not be able to make it to your event can support your fundraising efforts easily.

It's very easy to use and a great way to kick off your fundraising. To get started go to just follow these simple steps:

1. Go to [www.altruism.ie](http://www.altruism.ie)
2. Sign Up
3. Click on 'fundraise for charities'
4. Type 'VSO' in the search box
5. Click on the VSO page
6. When the VSO page appears, click on 'Create Fundraising Page'
7. Set up your page! See Page 11 for a template of what you can copy and paste into your page about VSO. It is also a good idea to upload an image of yourself, change your target amount to €1,500 and customise the thank you note which will automatically be sent to everyone who donates.
12. Click on publish your page – you're all done!

Use your **Facebook, Twitter** and other social media accounts to spread the word about your events. Include a link to your Altruism.ie page in your Facebook status; that way you are reaching out to your networks beyond Ireland. Use social media to thank your supporters and to update them on your progress.

You can opt to send an email to your contacts through Altruism.ie, or you could simply email around the link to all of your contacts. The internet makes fundraising so quick and straight forward. Why not drop us a line at the VSO office if you would like to talk through setting up your Altruism.ie page and how best to make use of online fundraising?



## Template for your Altruism page

Below are some templates that you might like to use when setting up your Altruism.ie page:

“Hi everyone,

Thanks for visiting my personal fundraising page. I am taking up the post of [insert your placement role] with VSO in [insert your placement country] in [insert your departure date]. I will be supporting the [insert partner organisation] to [insert brief description of your role overseas].

Please see below a short synopsis of what VSO is all about. I would be so grateful if you would consider financially supporting my chosen charity either now or into the future. You can donate using the "sponsor me now" button below via credit or debit card. You can be assured that your transaction on the Altruism.ie website is very secure. You will automatically receive an e-mail from me thanking you for your support, and acknowledging the amount of your donation. Any donation no matter how small is hugely appreciated. Please remember that the money is not for me, it is for VSO! You might keep VSO in mind this year if you are doing any fundraising and looking for a worthy charity. To find out more about the work they do visit [www.vso.ie](http://www.vso.ie).

Many thanks in advance for your support “

## Some key messages that you can tell your supporters about VSO and why you are fundraising

It is very important that people know what their hard earned money will support, and that you as a Volunteer are comfortable in explaining the work that VSO Volunteers do. Your friends and family will be keen to support you, and it is equally as important that they are confident in supporting VSO.

Below are some guidelines and facts about VSO that will support you in communicating about VSO to your supporters.

### ***VSO? I've never heard of them! Who are they?***

VSO is an international development organisation that works through placing skilled Volunteers overseas. VSO believes that bringing people together is the most effective way to fight poverty and bring about positive change. VSO Volunteers share their skills with their counterparts overseas, who will in turn be able to build the capacity of the organisations and communities with whom they work, creating a ripple effect.

### ***I've heard that overseas Volunteering is more like a holiday.***

VSO Volunteers go through a thorough recruitment and selection process and are only placed where their skills are needed by a Partner organisation overseas. VSO Volunteers undergo extensive training and preparation, and typically spend 1-2 years working overseas. They work alongside local counterparts, following the same working hours and working in the same conditions, often working and living in communities that are facing



significant challenges. VSO is a professional placement and definitely not a holiday!

***Would it not be more effective to just send the money directly over there?***

VSO believes that people are the best agents of change, and that by working together we make real change happen. VSO works with local organisations who are working to bring about positive change in their own countries and communities, and the role of Volunteers is to use their skills to build the capacity of these organisations. The skills that a Volunteer passes on can then be passed on to others in the organisation and community. This means the change is wide reaching, lasting and sustainable.

***Are they a new organisation?***

VSO was set up in the UK in 1958 and in Ireland in 2004. Since 1958, VSO has placed over 40,000 Volunteers overseas and there are approximately 2,000 VSO Volunteers working across Africa and Asia at any one time. The VSO model of Volunteering has changed since its foundation, with the focus now being on skilled professionals with several years of post-qualification experience.

***What areas and countries do they work in?***

VSO currently works in 26 countries across Asia and Africa. The main areas which VSO works in are health, education, disability, secure livelihoods, and participation and governance. I myself will be working as an education/health/business.... Volunteer.

## Other stuff you might need to know

### Collections

#### Public Collections

Street collections in a public place require a permit from the Gardaí. VSO can apply for this on your behalf. Please be sure to give us plenty of notice if you need a Garda permit as it typically takes 4-6 weeks to acquire a permit. There may also be delays or complications with issuing the permits which are out of our hands. All collectors must be over 16, wear an identification badge and carry a certificate from VSO. You need to clearly state who and what you are collecting for and use official VSO collection buckets.

#### Licensing Laws

- If you wish to sell alcohol at an event it must be licensed
- If you need to apply for a license or bar extension please work in partnership with your venue
- Public buildings such as a GAA club or community centre will probably have a license so please comply with the terms as agreed with the venue.

#### Bag Packs

- Bag packs must be organised with the retailer prior to the event. VSO can provide you with a letter confirming that you are fundraising as a VSO Volunteer.
- Many retailers are now focused on supporting local charities, so it can be quite difficult to secure a bagpacking slot.
- Your most likely chance of success for securing a backpack is to approach your local supermarket in person.
- If you plan on doing a backpack, see if you can get a slot during a particularly busy time e.g Saturday afternoons, run up to Christmas, St Patrick's Day, Bank Holiday weekend.
- Ensure all your collectors are wearing VSO t-shirts and that you collect only using official VSO buckets
- Make sure that you and your supporters are friendly and chatty with shoppers



## Planning Template

Use the below template to assist you in planning out your fundraising event

Options for Events?	Where and when will I hold this event?	Do I need a licence/permit for this event?	What is my fundraising target for this event?	How many people do I want to attend?	How will I spread the word about this event?	Next steps for me



## Checklist for Fundraising Event

Set up Altruism.ie page?	
Selected an event?	
Secured a venue and date?	
Prizes/other logistics?	
Spread the word?	
Thanked my supporters?	
Let VSO know how the event went?	
Lodged money to VSO Ireland?	

*Best of luck with your fundraising efforts! Remember, VSO Ireland are here to support you in any way possible so please do get in touch with Mary at the VSO office if you require any support and be sure to let us know how your fundraising is going. We are very grateful for your valuable contribution towards enabling us to continue to send our wonderful Volunteers to share their skills and bring about lasting change in communities around the world.*

*Thanks so much!*

*Everyone at VSO Ireland*