Pestalozzi Christmas Challenge Award Application

The Big Give Christmas Challenge proved to be a significant fundraising success for Pestalozzi International Village Trust. We hoped to raise sufficient funds to cover school costs for two of our students; however we have made enough to cover the costs for THREE STUDENTS. The campaign had significant appeal for our supporters and the size of their average donation increased by 161%.

Introduction

This is the first year Pestalozzi has taken part in The Big Give Christmas Challenge.

We have identified the need to reach out to a new and younger audience of supporters and saw this as an opportunity to build our digital campaigning skills and to engage existing supporters in a different way as well as to reach new supporters. We know that while the total amount given by donors in the UK grew by about one percent last year, online giving is growing much faster, at about eight percent. Online donations now account for seven percent of total charity income in the UK, but are a tiny percentage of Pestalozzi income. We need to grow our skills in effectively using digital tools to boost our income.

The Concept

We know our students, and the challenges they have overcome, make compelling stories which resonate with our existing supporters. We felt focusing on individual stories would allow us to show potential supporters the difference their donation could have on the lives of individuals.

We chose the story of Mingyur Paldon, 17, because of its drama and theme of overcoming adversity. Mingyur who fled from Tibet across the Himalayas when she was three years old, and was lucky enough to be rescued by helicopter and taken to India. Mingyur took photographs of her home, a holy cave in northern India, and her mum, a nun in a monastery. She also used her mobile phone to shoot a video describing her home and her life.

Mingyur Paldon, 17, dreams of becoming a social worker so she can combat poverty and homelessness, and help children. Mingyur has vivid memories of fleeing Tibet across the Himalayas with her family at the age of just three. Luckily the family was rescued and was able to join the Tibetan community in exile in India, where her mother is now a nun. The family lives in a holy cave and their only income is from the gifts of pilgrims who worship at the monastery. Despite these hardships, Mingyur excelled in her education in India, and has joined Pestalozzi to complete her secondary education. She is studying Sociology, History and Philosophy.
The planning
Our Fundraising and Marketing Team met on a weekly basis in the run up to the Challenge and developed a plan to appeal to different groups of supporters. We developed a range of fundraising and marketing materials, focused on Mingyur’s story, and asked supporters to donate to support students like Mingyur. We built a page on our website to display the story of Mingyur, the photographs and video she had shot, and using this as the key focus of the campaign. We supported this with the production of two short videos where our chief executive, Susan Walton, explained the work of Pestalozzi and encouraged people to donate. We developed fliers and leaflets to describe Mingyur’s story and the process of The Big Give Challenge, and featured the campaign in an article in the Newsletter, which is distributed to our supporters.

Audiences and execution
We’d hoped the challenge would help us acquire new supporters, reinvigorate the enthusiasm of lapsed supporters and appeal to existing supporters, generating additional donations.

Our initial target was to raise £4,000 in pledges. We turned to donors who regularly donated more than £500 a year, Pestalozzi 200 Club members, who each donate more than £200 a year and our Trustees and Council Members. This secured support from 17 existing supporters.

We succeeded in attracting support from Reed Foundation (International) and it offered £2,000 additional match funding. This was the first time this foundation had supported Pestalozzi.

We were uncertain as to how our supporters would react to the appeal and felt a target of £12,000 was realistic – as it would be made up of £6,000 pledges matched by £6,000 donations

Individual supporters
We set out to reach our supporters with direct communications, both mail and email, and then amplified the message through social media channels and earned media coverage. We used the tight timeframe to create a sense of urgency.

Individual personalised emails and letters were sent to selected supporters introducing them to the appeal and asking for a donation during the Challenge window. These aimed to drive responses to our Christmas Challenge page on our website and, via a bit/ly link to the donation page on The Big Give website. A panel, promoting the campaign, was added to our website homepage, and online donation buttons were switched to The Big Give for the duration of the campaign. This was successful and there were 60 online donations during the
campaign, with a higher than average value of £152.

The campaign resonated with our supporters, and one family developed their own flier to email to their own friends and supporters with a plea to support the challenge. They even made Christmas wreaths to sell at the Pestalozzi Christmas Fayre.

The Friends of Pestalozzi group in the Isle of Man also actively supported the campaign with a donation of £1,501.

We supported the campaign with a range of events, some of which were organised specifically for the campaign. These included:

- A fundraising mufti day at Westfield Primary School, which was supported with a visit from our mascot;
- A fundraising cultural show at Ratton Secondary School, Eastbourne;
- A pop-up quiz in the Queen’s Head pub, Sedlescombe;
- Fundraising at the Claremont Senior School production of ‘Fiddler on the Roof’, which starred some of the Pestalozzi students;
- The Pestalozzi Christmas Fayre.

Wider audiences
We deliberately sought media coverage to help reach a wider audience. We secured a full-page article in the local newspaper series, and a 14 minute radio interview on the Danny Pike Show broadcast by both BBC Radio Sussex and BBC Radio Surrey.

The campaign was also promoted at a Let’s Do Business expo in Hastings, which exposed the key message to local businesses, as well as raising awareness of the charity itself.

Social media
We actively used social media to amplify the message and to help us reach a wider audience. We produced and edited a series of short videos of students explaining how important a Pestalozzi scholarship was to them, as well as memes with photographs of individual students and impactful quotes. Video footage from the fundraising events was posted on Facebook and Twitter with students actively promoting the posts.

- Facebook – Page views increased by 16% with a marked increase in the number of men viewing our page. The reach of our posts increased by 42%. Our posts were typically viewed by 501 people before the campaign, and during the week this rose to 863. This growth is even more remarkable as it was entirely organic growth, rather
than paid for growth. Our best performing post was video of students dancing at Ratton School, Eastbourne, which reached 1,900 people, highlighting the importance of using video.

- **Twitter** – We increased the number of tweets by 36%, which helped raise the number of people seeing the messages by 17%. The total number of people following us on Twitter rose to 1,860, and increased by 18 during the month.

**Outcomes**

### Funds raised

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total raised via The Big Give website (includes Gift Aid)</td>
<td>£16,373</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total raised offline (excludes Gift Aid still to be claimed)</td>
<td>£1,780.50</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Overall total</strong></td>
<td><strong>£18,152.50</strong></td>
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### Donors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Donor Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Gender Breakdown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online donors</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Males (37%) Females (63%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offline donors</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Males (32%) Females (68%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total donors</strong></td>
<td>78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We found some of our supporters were reluctant to use an online platform that was unfamiliar to them but were still keen to support the campaign. These donations are not included in the online donations, but are still attributed to the campaign in our records.

### New Donors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Donors</th>
<th>Amount donated</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>£1,576.20</td>
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### Anonymous Donors

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Anonymous Donors</th>
<th>Amount donated</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>£468</td>
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### Previously lapsed donors

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Previously lapsed donors</th>
<th>Amount donated</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>£1,980</td>
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Four schools donated a total of £2,344.32 and Friends of Pestalozzi Lewes and Friends of Pestalozzi Isle of Man donated a total of £1,532.16.

23 long-term supporters gave online, including seven who had not given for at least 18 months.

18 long-term supporters gave offline, including four who had not given for at least 18 months.

**Lessons learned**

- The campaign successfully generated support from people who had known about the charity but had not previously given, people who had not given recently (lapsed donors) and some new donors.
- The campaign resonated with existing loyal supporters, particularly the Friends of Pestalozzi Isle of Man, who organised additional fundraising events and with host family Andrew and Anne Hudson, who amplified the appeal to their family and friends.
- Personalised appeals to individuals, by email and letter, generated support, with some donors preferring to give in traditional ways rather than through the website.
- Students engaged in campaigning activities, taking part in a radio interview, appealing for funds at a school production, and holding collection pots, as well as amplifying campaign messages on social media.
- The campaign made effective use of a strong narrative, video and images.
The match-funding offer was appealing to our existing and lapsed donors, with these groups donating on average 161% more than in the past.
  o Male donors gave on average 201% more
  o Female donors gave on average 131% more

In planning for the next Christmas challenge we need to break it down into three phases:
  o Internal planning and preparation where we gather information on the narratives, collect photographs and videos, and prepare background information.
  o Generating support and commitment – Direct appeals to supporters, both as pledgers and then to raise interest in the campaign.
  o Collecting on the commitments – using the seven day period of the challenge to create a sense of urgency to bring in the donations.