

## Writing approach letters

Approaching local businesses, service clubs (Rotaries, Lions, Soroptimists), grantmaking trusts, professional organisations and other potential donors can be a very successful way of raising money. This type of fundraising can also be highly competitive, so your application needs to stand out. Here are a few guidelines:

- 1 You will get a better response by writing to local organisations, companies and trusts, rather than national headquarters.
- 2 Some trusts and organisations do not give to individuals so it's worth checking the relevant reference books listed **on the previous page**.
- 3 Write to a specific individual in an organisation rather than 'To whom it may concern', so you can follow up your letter and be sure someone has read it.
- 4 Explain where your placement will be and the type of work you will be involved in.
- 5 Try to assess the appropriate amount to ask for. It's a common mistake to ask for too little. If possible, find out how much an organisation has given to similar causes before.
- 6 Personalise your letters – use the name of a contact who suggested you write to this donor, or refer to your volunteer work, school etc.

### Winning letter from youth volunteer: £1,150

*'From the start of my fundraising I realised that my group of friends, family and contacts was too spread out and unreliable to make a sponsored event realistically viable. I did, however, realise that I was in indirect contact with lots of people who may be in a position to help me (mostly through parents, friends etc). I found that writing letters to people who knew of me had a good success rate, especially to directors or other people of high position in local finance, solicitors and insurance companies.*

*As well as businesses, I also had sponsorship from my old school, a local Rotary Club and other local charities. I spent a couple of hours in the library looking at the register of charitable trusts and finding out addresses, contact names etc. This proved to be highly successful, raising over £400. 'In total, I sent over 50 letters. The letters sent to bigger, more "impersonal" companies met with no success, saying they do give money to local charity, but had already spent their budget for the year. 'All my donations ranged between £50 and £200. Many people commented that my letter was very good and seemed to be the persuasive factor in my case.'*

The sample letters that follow can be used as guides for writing to friends and family, and to local businesses, community groups, trusts etc. You can of course write your own letters, including the 5 Ws: who, what, when, why, and where.

## Sample Letters for fundraisers

### Sample letter 1

[Your Contact Details ]  
[Potential Donors Contact Details]  
[Date]

Dear [Name of Contact]

I am writing to ask if you would be willing to support a charity event I am organising. I am part of [Name of your Organisation] and we are holding an event in aid of VSO on [Date]. We hope to raise enough to help VSO in sending more volunteers in developing countries.

Today, a quarter of the world's population still lives in extreme poverty. VSO is an international development charity that works through, and with, volunteers to fight global poverty and disadvantage. They bring together people to share skills, creativity and learning to build a fairer world. VSO volunteers from a wide range of professional backgrounds live and work as part of a community for up to two years, with the impact of their work lasting far beyond this time. You can find out more by visiting their website at [www.vso.org.uk](http://www.vso.org.uk)

I would like to ask if you would consider providing [e.g. refreshments/prize] for our event [e.g. auction]. We would be very grateful if you felt able to help make this event a success. In return we will advertise your support for the event on publicity materials and on the evening to over xx people.

I do hope that you will be able to support such a worthwhile cause. Please contact me on xxxx or email xxxx and I would be very happy to talk to you further. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

[Your Name]

Sample letter 2 - for Volunteers

[Your Contact Details ]  
[Potential Donors Contact Details]  
[Date]

Dear Friend

**Eat Chocolate AND Support Voluntary Service Overseas!**

I am sure you will know I have been selected by VSO to work overseas for two years from Spring 2005. I will be working for [insert your info]

Unlike some charities, VSO does not expect its volunteers to raise money to fund their placement; VSO pays for fares, insurance and holiday and resettlement grants, as well as providing a considerable amount of training, like language training, before you go abroad and when you are there. The placement employer (a government or NGO) pays a subsistence amount which may itself come from a charity source and provides accommodation,. Most of VSO's funds come from DfID, although it is increasingly expected to raise more of its own funds. It cost £15,000 to send a volunteer overseas.

I am therefore asking you for your support – not to support me specifically but to support VSO's work generally, in a painless way! I enclose a tube of Smarties. Enjoy the Smarties and then fill the empty tube with 20p pieces (or if you are feeling particularly generous or are anxious to make sure I get out of the country, £1 coins). Spend the next three months collecting 20p pieces, fill the tube and you could raise £14 without really noticing (or £40 if you take the particularly generous option!).

Please return the contents of the tube, even if not completely full, to me (either in coins or a cheque made payable to VSO) in the envelope, having signed the tax declaration on the front (which gives VSO 28p more per pound) by [insert date].

Thank you very much for your generosity. I will try and keep you up to date with my adventures and will use all the opportunities I can to bore you stiff with photos and artefacts, when I return. If you would like to know more about VSO go to [www.vso.org.uk](http://www.vso.org.uk).

With very best wishes

[Your Name]

### Sample letter 3 - for Volunteers

[Your contact details]

[Potential donor's contact details]

[Date]

Dear [Name of Contact]

As you may know, I have recently been selected by VSO to take up a two-year placement to work in a developing country. I am writing to you to ask for your support.

Today, a quarter of the world's population still lives in extreme poverty. VSO is an international development charity that works through, and with, volunteers to fight global poverty and disadvantage. They bring together people to share skills, creativity and learning to build a fairer world. VSO volunteers from a wide range of professional backgrounds live and work as part of a community for up to two years, with the impact of their work lasting far beyond this time.

[List here

- 1 Your motivations for volunteering with VSO
- 2 Where you are going
- 3 What you will be doing]

The average cost of recruiting, training and sending a volunteer on a placement is £15 000 a year. This is where you can help. If you would like to support VSO and help them to continue sending volunteers like me to share skills and change lives in some of the world's poorest countries, please make a donation online at [www.vso.org.uk](http://www.vso.org.uk) (enter my name in the comments box). Alternatively, you can send a cheque, made payable to "VSO", to me at the above address. If you are a UK tax payer please fill in enclosed the "Gift Aid" declaration so VSO can reclaim from the Inland Revenue currently 28p for every £1 you give.

Thank you in advance for your support. I am sure the experience of volunteering with VSO will prove to be both demanding and highly rewarding, and will ensure plenty of interesting stories to tell you about on my return!

Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

[Your Name]

## Sample letter 4 - for Global Xchange Volunteers

[Your Contact Details ]  
[Potential Donors Contact Details]  
[Date]

Dear [Name of Contact]

I have recently been accepted to take part in a unique and challenging experience. I will be representing [your town/area] as a participant on a Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) exchange programme called Global Xchange, between [UK exchange area] and [exchange area and country]. VSO is an international development organisation that works through volunteers.

The Global Xchange programme is a VSO and [name of partner organisation] initiative, which is open to people between the ages of 18 and 25. Through international volunteer exchange, Global Xchange aims to build active global citizens, committed to working for positive change. It achieves this through exposing young people to different cultures and attitudes in an intense working and learning situation. By developing young people in Africa, Asia and the UK, who are motivated to play an active role in both their local and their global communities, Global Xchange promotes volunteering to build a fairer world.

My participation in the exchange will be for a period of [programme length]. Beginning in [start date] I will be spending [amount] months in [exchange area] along with other young people from across the UK and from [exchange country]. During this time I will be living with a local family in [area] and will be involved in a community work project. In [departure date] my group will depart for [exchange country] where we will also live with local families and work on local community projects for a similar period. I will be returning to the UK in [return date].

As part of my commitment to the programme I have to raise £600. [You may choose to use the following paragraphs for different audiences] ...

I am undertaking a variety of fundraising activities [put in some examples of what you will be doing or have already done]. If you would like to make a donation towards my fundraising efforts for this project I would be very grateful. Please make any cheques payable to VSO (Global Xchange) and send to me in the envelope provided (this does help with responses). I will be very happy to update you with my progress on this project.

OR

I am approaching various organisations and members of my local community, informing them of my involvement with the Global Xchange programme and seeking sponsorship for the exchange. I hope that you will be interested in supporting this exciting new initiative and I will call you next week to discuss this request with you in more detail and to answer any questions that you may have.

Thank you very much for your time.

Yours sincerely

[Your Name]

## Sample letter 5 - for Youth for Development volunteers

[Your contact details]

[Potential donor's contact details]

[Date]

Dear [Name of contact]

I have recently been accepted to take part in a unique and challenging experience. I will be representing [your town/area] as a participant on a VSO initiative called Youth for Development.

VSO is an international development organisation that works through volunteers, and the Youth for Development initiative is open to people between the ages of 18 and 25. The aim of this pioneering programme is to increase people's ability to actively in the development of just, harmonious and sustainable societies. It achieves this through exposing young people to different cultures and attitudes in an intense working and learning situation. This promotes understanding and cooperation through work that benefits both the host communities and the volunteer.

My participation in the programme will be for a period of one year. From the beginning of [start date] I will be living and working with the local community in [country], working on a community-oriented project. I will be returning to the UK on [return date]. As part of my commitment to the programme, I have to raise a minimum of £700. [You may choose to use the following paragraphs for different audiences.]

I am undertaking a variety of fundraising activities: [put in some examples of what you will be doing or have already done.] If you would like to make a donation to my fundraising efforts for this project I would be very grateful. Please make any cheques payable to VSO (Youth for Development) and send them to me in the envelope provided. I will be very happy to update you with my progress on this project.

[OR]

I am approaching various organisations and members of my local community, informing them of my involvement with the Youth for Development programme and seeking sponsorship. I hope that you will be interested in supporting this exciting initiative. I will call you next week to discuss this request with you in more detail and to answer any questions that you may have.

Thank you very much for your time.

Yours sincerely

[Your name]