



Webinar: How to Make Your Centre Financially Abundant

November, 2024: Facilitated by Maitripa, Viryanaga, and Guest Speakers

Webinar Objective

To explore cultural and psychological barriers to fundraising and provide practical solutions to help Buddhist centres thrive financially, in alignment with their values.

Key Insights

Cultural Barriers to Fundraising

Many challenges to fundraising aren't practical—they stem from cultural conditioning and mindsets. Here are four common barriers:

1. Fear

- fear of running out of resources or alienating people when asking for money
- fear of being judged as greedy or too focused on money
- *solution:* Shift to an abundance mindset. Trust that people will want to give when inspired

2. Scarcity Mentality

- a pervasive belief that “there's never enough,” leading to limited ambition
- assuming people attending the centre can't afford to give
- *solution:* Ask for what is needed, and then let people decide for themselves. Highlight the value of contributions

3. “Dharma is Free” Mindset

- misunderstanding the principle of dāna. While the Dharma is priceless, creating a space for sharing it requires resources
- *solution:* Reframe the conversation around the value the centre brings to the community

4. **Ambition vs. Reluctance to Ask**

- aspiring to spread the Dharma widely while hesitating to ask for basic resources
- *solution:* Align financial strategy with your Bodhisattva aspiration; asking is part of supporting the sangha

Practical Ways to Address Cultural Challenges

1. **Normalise Money Conversations**

- include regular financial updates in newsletters and sangha meetings
- use clear, accessible language (e.g., “donation” instead of “dāna”)

2. **Address Scarcity Mentality**

- challenge assumptions about who can give
- celebrate generosity in your sangha and share its impact
- avoid comparing your centre to others—focus on inspiring your local community

3. **Build a Money-Confident Team**

- identify and train individuals comfortable with fundraising
- a small, confident team can create a significant impact over time

4. **Use a Spectrum of Fundraising Approaches**

- **personal asks:** Ideal for major donors
- **group appeals:** Effective for smaller, committed groups
- **telephone appeals:** Balance between time investment and return
- **video appeals:** Share the “why” of your centre’s needs, good for supporting other approaches
- **email/social media:** Broad reach but lower emotional engagement

5. **Make Giving ‘Frictionless’**

- set up an online donation page and simple self-service contactless payment options
- ensure donation opportunities are visible at events and in communications

6. Celebrate Generosity

- highlight donor contributions and share success stories
- thank donors personally and regularly
- reinforce generosity as a core cultural value

7. Encourage Experimentation

- test different fundraising methods and refine your approach
- celebrate progress, even small successes, as steps toward abundance

8. Run Regular Dana Appeals

- tie appeals to Dharma themes or events to inspire giving

9. Avoid Comparing Your Centre to Others

- see other centres' success as inspiration, not competition
- focus on creating a compelling vision and deepening local connections

10. Start Conversations About Money Conditioning

- facilitate workshops or group discussions on personal attitudes toward money
- normalise discussing our own financial conditioning as part of spiritual practice

Case Studies

1. [Mid-Essex Buddhist Centre \(Aryasara\):](#)

- shifted cultural attitudes toward money and increased financial stability
- practical actions included inspiring appeals and transparent communication

2. Birmingham Centre (Maitrisara):

- success with phone appeals as a relational, effective fundraising strategy
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Closing Reflection

"Fundraising isn't just about money—it's about building a culture of generosity, abundance, and connection. When we ask, we're inviting people to engage in something deeply meaningful."

For Further Support

The ECA Development Team is here to support your centres and teams. We specialise in offering tailored advice, support, and consultancy visits to work directly with you on any aspect of running a Buddhist Centre, including phone appeals, establishing a dana economy, or building a confident fundraising team.

Contact: viryanaga@triratnadevelopment.org (ECA Centre Consultant)