



Sustainability
Week Switzerland

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a single, vibrant green leaf. The background is a soft, out-of-focus bokeh of green foliage, suggesting a natural outdoor setting. The lighting is bright, highlighting the texture of the leaf and the skin of the hand.

Fundraising Guidelines

General Information

Sustainability Week Switzerland (SWS) has incubated different local sustainability week (LSW) in Switzerland between 2017 and 2020 in three editions, which had the aim of supporting local student organisations for sustainability, relieving financial struggles and pushing the movement into the local higher educational institution (HEI) system. After three years, 15 LSWs have been established in Switzerland, with a local coordination team at the local HEI. By analysing the local situation, a strategic decision has been made that **SWS will no longer grant automatic funds for the local sustainability week**. The main reason for this decision is to increase the independence of the organisational teams and to relieve the national team in fundraising.

The goal of this document is to help local sustainability weeks finance their activities and their teams. Additionally, this document gives recommendations on what to do and what not to do *by having a good and fair chance for all LSW to work*. The "Dont's" are written mainly to help your fundraising efficiency and also to keep a good reputation for the local, national and international team. Any wrongdoing can have consequences if the damage is consciously done by any person.

Check List

1. **Start early** planning a general budget for the events and activities (e.g. marketing, team building, etc.) It gets more difficult to receive money if you start fundraising late.
2. Decide, if you are going to fundraise or also look for sponsors. Keep in mind that **Fundraising and Sponsoring are not quite the same**. Fundraising is mostly based on good-will and nothing in return is expected in general (e.g. foundation, donation, ...). It is not prohibited to some advertisement in return, but helpful for a long-term partnership. Sponsoring is a sold advertisement-service with an oral or written contract with a person or organisations, which has to be reported as revenue. Be careful with the wording.
3. If you want to do **sponsoring**, try to offer the best advertisement platform at your local sustainability week via different channels by showing concrete possibilities in a package (e.g. banner at every event, logo, short commercial video at big events). Also do not oversell. If you go to more than one company, create different levels of sponsoring (e.g. silver sponsor, gold sponsor and platinum sponsor).
4. Create a list of potential leads and research for fundraising organisations and sponsoring organisations and keep it up to date. An example of this list is provided here:

No.	Organization / Private Person	Contact	Amount	Status	Comments
1	University of Rhein Head of Sustainability	Lawrence.smith@unirh.ch	1000	approved	Money received
2	RRRevolv	info@rrrevolve.ch	500	Pending	optional Giveaways
3	Max Meister	m.meister@example.ch	300	open	Contact by Dr. Hans Muster

Ideas

- Ask your **HEI**, if they want to financially support you long-term. Try to make a three-year financing term as a contract or as a letter of intent. You can find templates here.
 - First, try to reach out to the sustainable responsibility at your HEI.
 - If this responsible person is not available. Reach out to your director of university or head of department by writing an email.
 - If you still struggle to find a contact, ask your professors how to approach them in the best way.
 - Another option is reach out to institutes or departments generally for sustainable development or similar topics.
- Ask other **student organisations** at your local HEI for financial and non-financial support. An example is VSUZH for the University of Zurich, which supports Sustainability Week Zurich with a certain financial amount.
- Create a **fundraising event** before the week itself (e.g. Christmas party with collection) at your school for your local organisations.
- Ask your friends, family members, work colleagues or acquaintances for donation or support, if you need.
- Research about **local shops, companies and organisations**, which are promoting sustainability and would like to donate or sponsor money. An example is "Veloplus" supports Sustainability Week Rapperswil by sponsoring a winning prize for "Bike to HSR" and a company called "Werk- und Technologie Zentrum Linthgebiet", who offered free Bike repairs.
- Ask **city council and neighbourhood associations** in your cities for support. An example is "Energienstadt St. Gallen" supporting Sustainability Week St. Gallen.
- It doesn't have to be money all the time. It is possible to ask **natural donations** such as services, catering, give-away products (e.g. charitea drinks, choba choba chocolates, Ässbar voucher, and portable power bank with solar cells). Another possibility is to take over the costs of an activity (e.g. poster designing, printing costs).
- Collect money at the events during the week (Best practice: Use a donation box and QR-Codes for TWINT).

Do's

- **Talk with your HEI and present your experience of past LSW and its impact to you as students and as organizers.** Try to sign a three-year contract with your HEI.
- **Collect donations** by professors, students or local organisations.
- Work closely with **local sustainable shops, companies, organisations and municipal administrations** to improve the connectivity on the basis of local common ground:
 - Write to the responsible person directly instead of a general message to organisations. Try to find connections in your network, who can pitch your concept or ideas in the local week. Again, ask your professors for potential partners and support organisations.
 - Make your offerings to organisations as clear as possible. Create bundles or packages, describing what the sponsoring organisations get in return (e.g. visibility on social media, ...).
 - Ideally, choose fundraising and sponsoring organisations, which have something in common with your events and LSW theme. Or adjust your week theme based on your sponsoring. They will appreciate it.
 - Try to find a Win-Win situation for all parties. If you need to negotiate terms, then use BATNA¹-Principles.
 - To not promise too much. Find the right balance in giving and taking.
- Keep close contact, even after your events. E.g. **thank them for your support in a personal way and ask for feedback to improve.** They will appreciate it a lot.
- **Report and show your supporters to build trust, what are the outcomes and what you have achieved in that week,** how much you have spent for which events and activities and also clearly show how much money you have left.
- **Inform and update your team about the happenings in fundraising and sponsoring regularly,** so everyone can understand the situation. It can be frustrating sometimes regarding fundraising, but the goal is not to give up.
- **Adjust your budget according to your leads and accomplished fundraising / sponsoring deals.** Take the necessary actions and measures in your current LSW if you fundraise more or less than you expected. **An option for regulation is to create a base-model budget, which covers the necessary items, and a best-model budget, if you collect more money than expected.**

¹ "Best Alternative To a Negotiated Agreement" ([Link - Wiki](#))

Don'ts

- **Do not wait until the last minute for fundraising.** The earlier you start, the more the chance you fundraise enough money
- **Do not write national foundations or organisations for funding without the consensus of the SWS and other LSW.** Big organisations such as Migros, Coop, etc. will probably deny your proposal. Also, do not write any proposal to bigger foundations such as Stiftung Mercator, Foundation 3FO, The SWS as a national project requests money from those organisations in order to organize national meetings and workshops.
- **Do not ask companies or organisations for funds with the following criteria:**
 - Does not work with sustainable principles such as organisations harm the climate and environment, violate human and animal rights, produce products and services which harm the people, animals and the planet, do not treat their employees socially fair, is concluded at least in a scandal, does not have a good reputation on sustainability ...
 - Political parties
 - Organisations with doubt of greenwashing or SDG washing.
 - If you are unsure whether an organisation is appropriate to ask for money, ask your contact person of SWS for support.
 - If you receive support from one or many organisations with above mentioned criteria, the consequences for the LSW will be discussed from the SWS board (e.g. excluding from the national network).
- We do not recommend starting a crowdfunding nationally, if you do not have the resources for marketing, creating goodies and delivering.

Applying for SWS Emergency Pot

We do understand that not every LSW has the same opportunities for fundraising due to the size of the city, a number of students at the local HEI, event planning, etc.. Therefore, the SWS has built every year a reserve for the project SWS. The reserve money should act as an “emergency pot” especially for LSW, which have had fundraising efforts made, but did not reach their budget target. In order to apply for the emergency pot, you have to show evidence that you have tried to fundraise locally with the given means. An example of evidence is showing the responses of the organisations. **In your application, the following document must be included: a proposal why you need the money and how much, your event plan and budget with adjustments you made before and after not finding enough financial support, a bank statement of the association which organizes the LSW and several pieces of evidence of fundraising approaches (e.g. the list with already contacted organisations and email exchanges).** The application must be handed in a zip-file by end of January of the following edition to finance@sustainabilityweek.ch and cc your contact person. Keep in mind that the more money you need for your LSW, the less money is available for other LSWs.

If you have any questions, reach out to the author.

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