PCC's National Fundraiser Reality Check

A confidential poll on how Irish fundraisers view their sector and its future

Survey Report

April 2009

public communications centre

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

1. OBJECTIVES

This research serves to determine **a basic 'reality check' on the state of fundraising** in light of the current recessionary times.

More specifically, the 'reality check' established the **state of income, fundraising activities and fundraising staffing levels** among organisations that fundraise.

2. METHODOLOGY

The 'reality check' exercise was undertaken during the **National Conference for Fundraisers in Ireland on the 26th March 2009.** It is a snapshot view of a sample of fundraisers who chose to engage with the research on the day.

A **self-completion questionnaire** was employed to collect the information from the fundraisers. All attendant fundraisers were targeted by means of personal approaches to encourage participation in the exercise as well as distribution of the questionnaires in exhibition and coffee areas.

Confidentiality and anonymity were assured, so respondents were asked to supply their email contact details on a separate slip of paper should they wish to receive a copy of the findings.

3. SAMPLE

The sample constitutes organisations that fundraise who attended the conference. A total of **125 organisations** were present and a sample of **49 questionnaires was returned,** thus, eliciting a **response rate of 39%.**

A total of **42 respondents requested copies of the findings.** These constitute a cross-section of organisations: domestic and international, working in a variety of sectors, and of small, medium and large sizes.

The questionnaire asked two classification questions of respondents: the **total fundraising income** (excluding statutory) and the **total number of fundraising staff.**

Total fundraising income (excluding statutory)

Fundraising income	Total Sample	
	N	%
Up to €10,000	5	10
€11,000 to €50,000	4	8
€100,000 to €500,000	13	27
€750,000	1	2
€1,000,000 to €5,500,000	15	31
€20,000,000 to €50,000,000	2	4
No answer	9	18
Total	**49**	**100.0**

- Approximately **one fifth of responding organisations (18%) did not answer** this question.
- Almost **one half (45%) have an income level of half a million euro or less** while the **remainder (37%) stretches up to €50,000,000.**
- The most commonly quoted figures **were twofold:** 31% have a fundraising income of **€1,000,000 to €5,500,000** while an almost comparative percentage (27%) has **€100,000 to €500,000.**

The number of fundraising staff

Number of fundraising staff	Fundraising income		Total Sample
	Up to €1m	€1m or more	
None	30%	6%	16%
1	39%	12%	23%
2 to 4	22%	41%	31%
5 to 10	4%	24%	10%
15 to 100	0%	12%	6%
No answer	1%	6%	14%
N*	**23**	**17**	**49**

* N = sample size pertaining to each column of answers i.e. the total number of respondents who answered that question.

TOTAL SAMPLE:

- **Most organisations (85%) claimed to have fundraising staff.**
- The **majority has less than 5** such staff (54%); with almost a quarter (23%) has one, while most have between 2 and 4 (31%).

BY FUNDRAISING INCOME:

- **The larger the fundraising income, the more fundraising staff employed.** Those organisations with a total fundraising income of 'up to €1m' are more likely to have 1 to 4 fundraising staff while those organisations with a total fundraising income of '€1m or more' are more likely to have greater numbers of such staff, especially 2 to 10 staff.

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

CHANGE IN INCOME

- **Most organisations (86%) expect the overall income of their organisation to change in the coming year.** More expect a decrease (53%) than an increase (32%), and most expect a 5-10% increase (25%).
- **This expectation differs according to the size of the total fundraising income (excluding statutory) of the organisation:** the smaller the fundraising budget, the greater the likelihood of expecting a change in the overall income, the greater the expectation for a decrease rather than an increase in income, and the greater the expected percentage drop in income.

INCOME STREAMS HIT HARD

- **Nine in ten organisations (92%) identify income streams that are being hit especially hard.** 'Government' (55%) tops the list, followed by 'Corporates' (33%), and 'Events' (16%). 'Individuals' (14%) and 'High donors' (12%) to a much lesser extent.
- **The smaller organisations are more likely to report their income streams being hit especially hard.** The **larger the fundraising budget, the broader the spread of income streams that are being hit**. The smaller organisations are being most significantly affected by 'Government'.

INCOME STREAMS INCREASING

- On the other hand, **two-thirds (66%) expect an increase in certain income streams;** especially 'Regular givers' (25%), followed equally by 'Individuals' (19%) and 'Events' (19%) and then 'Churches' (17%).
- **The smaller organisations are more likely to claim that 'no income streams are holding up or increasing' (41%).** Only 6% of organisations with a fundraising income of '€1m or more' make the claim.
- **Furthermore, the smaller organisations list less income streams** that are holding up or increasing compared to the larger organisations.
- **The smaller organisations also highlight different streams as commendable performers:** 'Regular givers' (23%) and 'Events' (23%); compared to 'Individuals' (35%), 'Regular givers' (29%) and 'Churches' (24%) for the larger organisations.

NUMBER OF FUNDRAISING STAFF

- Half of the organisations (53%) have not made changes, or are not planning to make changes, to the number of fundraising staff it employs. The main change is towards an increase (31%) rather than a decrease (2%).
- Larger organisations are more likely than smaller organisations to report a change (41%) in the number than smaller organisations (30%), but any change is only of a positive nature (41%).
- **Meanwhile,** smaller organisations are less likely to report change, but they state **a 'decrease' (4%)** which does not happen with the larger organisations; however, the smaller organisations' claiming an increase (26%) is greater than this decrease.

REDUCTION IN FUNDRAISING PROGRAMMES

- **Most organisations (74%) have not eliminated, or do not plan to eliminate or significantly reduce,** involvement in any of its fundraising programmes.
- There is a **similar pattern of response among both the larger and the smaller organisations.**
- **One fifth (9 organisations)** have done so or are planning to do so; with **two main types of fundraising programmes affected: 'Events' (6) and 'Direct mail' (5)**, followed by 'DRTV' (3).
- **'Events' is the main programme that is being reduced or considered for reduction regardless of the size of the fundraising income** of an organisation.

INCREASE IN FUNDRAISING PROGRAMMES

- **Most organisations (86%) have increased, or are planning to add or significantly increase,** activity in fundraising programmes; only 6% has not or does not plan to do so.
- There is a **similar pattern of response among both the larger and the smaller organisations.**
- A **broad spectrum of fundraising programmes** was mentioned as attention for increased activity. The **three most popular ones being 'Corporate' (51%), 'Events' (45%) and 'Trusts & foundation grants' (45%);** followed by 'Public appeals/token sales' (31%), 'Statutory grants' (26%), 'High donors' (26%), 'Donor acquisition' (24%) and 'Donor relations' (21%).
- There are **similarities as well as differences depending upon the size of the fundraising income of the organisation.**
- **Both sets mention three main fundraising programmes:** 'Corporate', 'Events' and 'Trusts & foundation grants'. In addition, the larger organisations expect to equally increase activity around 'Legacies'.
- Overall, **the larger organisations are involved in a broader range of programmes,** answering for all except 'Facebook (website)'.

CONCLUSIONS

- The **recession is affecting** the vast majority of organisations that fundraise in a variety of ways.
- Nearly all organisations (86%) are **expecting their overall income to change.** While over a half (53%) is expecting it to decrease, almost one third (32%) is expecting an increase.
- Almost every organisation (92%) has income streams that are being hit hard and **smaller sized organisations are being hit harder,** especially from government sources.
- Two-thirds of organisations (66%) plan for **some increase in certain fundraising streams,** especially 'Regular givers', 'Individuals', 'Events' and 'Churches'.
- There is a positive outlook on fundraising activity with nearly everyone reporting an **increase in the effort to raise money.**
- Most organisations (84%) are **not reducing the size of their fundraising team,** with one third (31%) expecting to increase it.
- The majority of organisations (86%) report **increased activity in fundraising programmes,** especially 'Corporates', 'Events' and 'Trusts & Foundation grants'.
- Thus, in recessionary times, it would appear that **most organisations are being adaptive and pro-active** in their plight to sustain and/or attract fundraising income.
- This is a **snapshot view** of a market that is challenged by the recession. Further research would add to the trends and patterns that have emerged from this study and would provide direction for any future activity that could benefit fundraising activity.

MAIN FINDINGS

Chart 1. Expectation for change in overall income in this year compared to last year

Expected change	Fundraising income		Total sample*
	Up to €1m	€1m or more	
Increase 11% or more	13%	6%	10%
Increase 5 - 10%	9%	12%	10%
Increase 1 - 4%	22%	6%	12%
No change	4%	18%	10%
Decrease 1 - 4%	13%	18%	16%
Decrease 5 - 10%	26%	29%	25%
Decrease 11% or more	13%	0%	12%
Don't know	0%	12%	4%
N	**23**	**17**	**49**

* The charts present the total figures for all 49 responding organisations as well as a breakdown by fundraising income. In light of the fact that nine respondents did not supply a fundraising income, the total sample is greater.

TOTAL SAMPLE:

- **Most organisations (86%) expect the overall income of their organisation to change** this year compared to last year; 10% expect 'no change' while 4% 'don't know'.
- The **majority expect a negative change: 53**% expect a decrease in their income, especially by 5-10% (25%).
- One third expect a **positive change (32%)**, with similar numbers expecting varying degrees of change: 12% expect an increase of 1-4%, 10% expect an increase of 5-10%, while another 10% expect an increase of 11% or more.

BY FUNDRAISING INCOME:

- Of those who specified a total fundraising income (excluding statutory), **the smaller this income, the more change that is expected:** 89% of those with 'up to €1m' expect change compared to 70% of those with €1m or more.
- Furthermore, **the smaller the fundraising budget, the greater the expectation for a decrease in income:** 52% of those with 'up to €1m' expect a decrease of some sort compared to 47% of those with '€1m or more'.
- **The larger the budget, the lower the expected percentage drop in income:** not beyond 10%; whereas those with a budget of 'up to €1m' expect a decrease of up to 11% or more.

Chart 2. Income streams being hit especially hard

Income streams	Fundraising income		Total sample
	Up to €1m	€1m or more	
Government	74%	29%	55%
Corporates	35%	29%	33%
Events	22%	18%	16%
Individuals	13%	18%	14%
High donors	9%	18%	12%
Regular givers (e.g. direct debits)	4%	12%	8%
Trusts & foundations	9%	12%	8%
Schools	0%	6%	6%
Public appeals/token sales (e.g. Daffodil Day)	4%	6%	6%
Retail	0%	12%	4%
All of the above	4%	6%	4%
No income streams are being hit especially hard	0%	18%	8%
N	**23**	**17**	**49**

TOTAL SAMPLE:

- **Nine in ten organisations (92%) identify certain income streams as being hit especially hard.**
- **All income streams are having a negative effect,** with some being more affected than others.
- The **most affected income stream is 'Government':** over half (55%) claim it is being hit especially hard.
- This is **followed by 'Corporates':** with a third (33%) stating such.
- Three income streams follow with a similar effect: 'Events' (16%), 'Individuals' (14%) and 'High donors' (12%).
- All of the remaining income streams are affected by less than one in ten organisations.

BY FUNDRAISING INCOME:

- **The organisations with the smaller fundraising income are more likely to report their income streams being hit especially hard:** no organisation with a fundraising budget of 'up to €1m' claimed that 'no income streams are being hit especially hard' compared to 18% of organisations with a budget of '€1m or more'.
- The **larger the fundraising budget, the broader the spread of income streams that are being hit** especially hard.
- Organisations with a **fundraising income of 'up to €1m' are being predominantly hit by one main source:** 'Government' (74%; 17 organisations). Followed to a lesser extent by 'Corporates' (35%) and 'Events' (22%). All others are rarely if at all mentioned.
- Organisations with a fundraising income of '€1m or more' are being hit by all of the income streams and again, with 'Corporates (29%) and 'Events' (29%) being hit most.

Chart 3. Income streams holding up or increasing

Income streams	Fundraising income		Total sample
	Up to €1m	€1m or more	
Regular givers (e.g. direct debits)	23%	29%	25%
Individuals	14%	35%	19%
Events	23%	18%	19%
Churches	14%	24%	17%
Legacies	9%	18%	10%
Trusts & foundations	14%	6%	8%
Corporates	5%	12%	8%
Government	5%	12%	8%
High donors	5%	12%	6%
Door to door collections	9%	0%	6%
Schools	0%	6%	2%
Public appeals/token sales	0%	6%	2%
Membership	%	%	2%
No income streams are holding up or increasing	41%	6%	23%
Don't know	5%	12%	10%
N	22	17	48

TOTAL SAMPLE:

- **One third of organisations (33%) do not identify an increase in any income stream:** 23% claim 'no income streams are holding up or increasing' while 10% 'don't know'.
- The **main source of income increase is 'Regular givers' (25%).**
- Followed equally by **'Individuals' (19%) and 'Events' (19%) and then 'Churches' (17%).**
- **'Legacies'** is expected to grow by 10% while **'Trusts & foundations', 'Corporates' and 'Government'** are each expected to grow by 8%.
- All other income streams are affected by 6% or less.

BY FUNDRAISING INCOME:

- **The smaller organisations are almost seven times more likely to claim that 'no income streams are holding up or increasing':** 41% of them compared to 6% of organisations with a fundraising income of '€1m or more'.
- Furthermore, **the smaller organisations list less income streams** that are holding up or increasing compared to the larger organisations.
- **The two sets of organisations identify different income streams as commendable performers.**
- The **smaller organisations** identify 'Regular givers' (23%) and 'Events' (23%) as being those which are increasing or holding up the most while the **larger organisations** list 'Individuals' (35%), 'Regular givers' (29%) and 'Churches' (24%) as having the most positive effect as income streams.

Chart 4. Changes in the number of fundraising staff

Change	Fundraising income		Total sample
	Up to €1m	€1m or more	
Decrease	4%	0%	2%
No change	57%	41%	53%
Increase	26%	41%	31%
Don't know	13%	18%	14%
N	23	17	49

TOTAL SAMPLE:

- **Half of the organisations (53%) have not made changes, or is not planning to make changes,** to the number of fundraising staff it employs.
- In fact, the **main change is towards an increase** with almost one third claiming such (31%).
- A minimal proportion claims a decrease (2%).
- With 14% answering 'don't know'.

BY FUNDRAISING INCOME:

- **Larger organisations are more positive in their assessment of the number of fundraising staff employed:** while they are more likely to report a change (41%) in the number than smaller organisations (30%), it is only of an increasing nature (41%).
- While the smaller organisations are less likely to report change, there is an **occurrence of a 'decrease'** (4%) which does not happen with the larger organisations. However, the smaller organisations' claiming of an increase (26%) is greater than this decrease.

Chart 5. Reduction in fundraising programmes

Reduction	Fundraising income		Total sample
	Up to €1m	€1m or more	
Yes	13%	19%	18%
No	78%	75%	74%
Don't know	9%	6%	6%
No answer	0%	6%	2%
N	23	16	49

TOTAL SAMPLE:

- **Most organisations (74%) have not eliminated, or do not plan to eliminate or significantly reduce,** involvement in any of its fundraising programmes.
- While almost **one fifth (18%) has done so or is planning to do so.**
- 8% 'don't know' or did not provide an answer.

BY FUNDRAISING INCOME:

- There is a **similar pattern of response among both the larger and the smaller organisations.**
- Although, **the organisations with a fundraising income of '€1m or more' are somewhat more likely to state a reduction** (19%) compared to the organisations with 'up to €1m' (13%).

Chart 6. Fundraising programmes reduced

Programme	Fundraising income		Total sample
	Up to €1m	€1m or more	
Events	2	2	6
Direct mail	1	1	5
DRTV	0	0	3
Corporate	0	1	2
Retail	1	0	2
Public appeals/token sales	0	0	2
Combination of many	1	0	1
N	**3**	**3**	**9**

* The number of respondents to whom this chart applies is too small for percentages to be statistically significant. Therefore, the chart presents numbers rather than percentages.

TOTAL SAMPLE:

- There are **two main types of fundraising programmes that are being negatively affected: 'Events' (6 organisations) and 'Direct mail' (5)**, followed by 'DRTV' (3).
- All others were mentioned by two or less organisations.

BY FUNDRAISING INCOME:

- The breakdown by fundraising income shows that **'Events' is the main fundraising programme that is being reduced or considered for reduction regardless of the size of the fundraising income** of an organisation.

Chart 7. Increase in fundraising programmes

Increase	Fundraising income		Total sample
	Up to €1m	€1m or more	
Yes	87%	88%	86%
No	4%	6%	6%
Don't know	9%	6%	8%
N	23	17	49

TOTAL SAMPLE:

- **Most organisations (86%) have increased, or are planning to add or significantly increase,** activity in fundraising programmes.
- Only 6% has not or does not plan to do so while 8% 'don't know'.

BY FUNDRAISING INCOME:

- There is a **similar pattern of response among both the larger and the smaller organisations:** they are equally likely to have increased, or are planning to increase, fundraising activity.

Chart 8. Fundraising programmes increased

Programme	Fundraising income		Total sample
	Up to €1m	€1m or more	
Corporate	50%	40%	51%
Events	50%	48%	45%
Trusts & foundation grants	50%	40%	45%
Public appeals/token sales	35%	33%	31%
Statutory grants	35%	7%	26%
High donors	20%	33%	26%
Donor acquisition	30%	20%	24%
Donor relations	30%	20%	21%
Legacies	5%	40%	17%
Face to face	15%	20%	17%
Public appeals	25%	7%	14%
Direct mail	5%	27%	12%
Facebook website	10%	0%	5%
Retail	0%	7%	2%
DRTV	0%	7%	2%
Trading	0%	7%	2%
New media	0%	7%	2%
Don't know	0%	7%	2%
No answer	5%	%	5%
N	19	15	42

TOTAL SAMPLE:

- A **broad spectrum of fundraising programmes** was mentioned as attention for increased activity.
- The **three most popular ones are 'Corporate' (51%), 'Events' (45%) and 'Trusts & foundation grants' (45%).**
- These are followed by 'Public appeals/token sales' (31%), 'Statutory grants' (26%), 'High donors' (26%), 'Donor acquisition' (24%) and 'Donor relations' (21%).
- Nine others were mentioned to a lesser extent.
- Only three organisations (7%) did not state a programme.

BY FUNDRAISING INCOME:

- There are similarities as well **as differences in the patterns of response for different sized organisations.**
- **Both sets of organisations have increased, or expect to add or significantly increase, activity in three main fundraising programmes:** 'Corporate', 'Events' and 'Trusts & foundation grants'. In addition, the larger organisations expect to equally increase activity around 'Legacies'.
- Overall, **the larger organisations are involved in a broader range of programmes,** answering for all except 'Facebook (website)'. The smaller organisations answer for fewer programmes.

PCC's National Fundraiser Reality Check

PLEASE TICK A NUMBER TO REPRESENT YOUR ANSWER OR WRITE ON THE LINES PROVIDED.

ALL ANSWERS WILL BE TREATED WITH ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY.

1. How do you expect the overall income of your organisation to change this year compared to last year?

1. ☐ Increase 11% or more
2. ☐ Increase 5 -10%
3. ☐ Increase 1 - 4%
4. ☐ No Change
5. ☐ Decrease 1 - 4%
6. ☐ Decrease 5 -10%
7. ☐ Decrease 11% or more
0. ☐ Don't know

2 Which income streams in your organisation, if any, are being hit especially hard? (Please answer all that apply).

1. ☐ Individuals
2. ☐ High donors
3. ☐ Regular givers (e.g. direct debits)
4. ☐ Door to door collections
5. ☐ Legacies
6. ☐ Events
7. ☐ Schools
8. ☐ Trusts and foundations
9. ☐ Corporates
10. ☐ Churches
11. ☐ Government
12. ☐ Retail
13. ☐ Public appeals/token sales (e.g. Daffodil Day)
14. ☐ Any other: please specify____________________
15. ☐ No income streams are being hit especially hard
0. ☐ Don't know

3 Which income streams in your organisation, if any, are holding up or increasing? (Please answer all that apply)

1. ☐ Individuals
2. ☐ High donors
3. ☐ Regular givers (e.g. direct debits)
4. ☐ Door to door collections
5. ☐ Legacies
6. ☐ Events
7. ☐ Schools
8. ☐ Trusts and foundations
9. ☐ Corporates
10. ☐ Churches
11. ☐ Government
12. ☐ Retail
13. ☐ Public appeals/token sales
14. ☐ Any other: please specify____________________
15. ☐ No income streams are holding up or increasing
0. ☐ Don't know

4 Has your organisation made changes, or is it planning to make changes, in the number of fundraising staff it employs?

1. ☐ Decrease in fundraising staff numbers
2. ☐ No change
3. ☐ Increase in fundraising staff numbers
0. ☐ Don't know

5. Has your organisation eliminated, or is it planning to eliminate or significantly reduce, involvement in any of its fundraising programmes?

1. ☐ Yes
2. ☐ No
0. ☐ Don't know

QUESTIONNAIRE

6 If yes, what type of programmes has it or does it plan to eliminate or significantly reduce? (Please answer all that apply). **If no or don't know, skip to question 7**

1. ☐ Statutory grants
2. ☐ Trusts and foundation grants
3. ☐ Corporate
4. ☐ High donors
5. ☐ Legacies
6. ☐ Events
7. ☐ Retail
8. ☐ Public appeals/token sales
9. ☐ Direct mail
10. ☐ Face to face
11. ☐ DRTV
12. ☐ Donor acquisition
13. ☐ Trading
14. ☐ Public appeals
15. ☐ Donor relations
16. ☐ Any other: please specify____________________
17. ☐ No programme

0. ☐ Don't know

7 Has your organisation increased, or is it planning to add or significantly increase, activity in any fundraising programmes?

1. ☐ Yes
2. ☐ No

0. ☐ Don't know

8 If yes, what type of programmes has it or does it plan to add or significantly increase? (Please answer all that apply). **If no or don't know, skip to question 9.**

1. ☐ Statutory grants
2. ☐ Trusts and foundation grants
3. ☐ Corporate
4. ☐ High donors
5. ☐ Legacies
6. ☐ Events
7. ☐ Retail
8. ☐ Public appeals/token sales
9. ☐ Direct mail
10. ☐ Face to face
11. ☐ DRTV
12. ☐ Donor Acquisition
13. ☐ Trading
14. ☐ Public appeals
15. ☐ Donor relations
16. ☐ Any other: please specify____________________
17. ☐ No programme

0. ☐ Don't know

ORGANISATION PROFILE

9 Finally, please supply the following information on your organisation:

Total fundraising income (excluding statutory)

€ ____________________________________

Total number of fundraising staff ______________

Thank you very much for your time and co-operation. Please return this questionnaire to a PCC staff member or the collection box in the conference reception area.

To get a copy of the results, leave your email contact details in the collection box or email them to john@pcc.ie or carmel@pcc.ie.

Dynamic organisations need incisive research to ensure that they can crystalise their messages and make the delivery of those messages more direct, more persuasive and more effective. We devise and implement these kinds of research projects. We take pride in the rigour we apply to learning about your organisation and your issue. We offer message testing focus groups and dedicated surveys.
We can help you:

- understand your target audiences and how to move them closer to your issue
- advance-test your key messages to guarantee success
- benchmark pre and post campaign issue awareness, and
- benchmark awareness levels for your organisation and its work.

If you wish to know any more about this survey or PCC and its research work contact:

John Sutton
john@pcc.ie or 087 2663168

or **Carmel Grogan**
carmel@pcc.ie or 087 6889243

public communications centre

www.pcc.ie