



Donor's stories

THE PRINCE'S TRUST

HRH the Prince of Wales is President of The Prince's Charities, of which the Prince's Trust is the largest. Discover how the Trust works with donors to get young people into education, training or employment.

HRH the Prince of Wales is the President of The Prince's Charities, which is an umbrella group of 17 charities, all of which focus on one of the following four areas: the built environment, responsible business and enterprise, young people and education, and international sustainability. The Prince's Trust is the largest of these 17 charities, and is focused on getting young people into education, training or employment. Rebecca Lloyd is the Head of Fundraising at The Prince's Charities, and Rachel Polmay is Director of Trusts and Philanthropy at The Prince's Trust.

"For more than 35 years, HRH The Prince of Wales has been at the forefront of identifying charitable need and setting up and driving forward charities to meet that need. From the founding days of The Prince's Trust in the mid-1970s, his charitable interests have grown to the point where His Royal Highness is Patron of over 400 charities. And the 17 charities he has personally founded now represent, as a group, the largest multi-cause charitable enterprise in the UK. Whether on UK visits or overseas tours, The Prince is always looking for ways in which his charities can help to improve the quality of life within a neighbourhood. He is incredibly passionate about a wide range of issues that affect people's everyday lives, and the communities in which they live.



He believes in the importance of charities working together in an holistic way and this is very much how The Prince's Charities operate, working together in places such as Burnley and Stoke-on-Trent to build sustainable communities and find practical answers to issues that people really care about.

Altogether, over one-third of income to The Prince's Charities comes from major corporate and major individual donors. Having a high-profile President naturally brings us support, and His Royal Highness has fantastic convening power; but it is his genuine passion and inspirational approach that donors respond to. The Prince recognises the great impact that philanthropy can have and how important it is to encourage a culture of philanthropy in the UK – as illustrated by HRH founding the Arts Philanthropy Medal five years ago.

Our major donors are important to us, not just because of their gift, but because they often offer strategic advice and bring their own contacts. They may also offer support through their business. When a donor gives us a large gift of £1m or more, it really means something to them and they have put a lot of thought into it; they want to be really engaged and for a long period of time.

The background to The Prince's Trust is that in the 1970s and 1980s, HRH The Prince of Wales saw that young people were struggling to see a future for themselves. He passionately wanted to change this, and set up The Prince's Trust to support young people who were disadvantaged. The charity runs programmes and projects that give practical support to help young people get back on track and into education, training or employment.



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The Prince's Trust has an innovative approach to tackling issues and really focuses on growing self-esteem and confidence in young people. Our work complements that of government and other charities and builds on this through elements like our long-term mentoring.



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The majority of our private income is from corporate supporters, and we are fortunate enough to have seen these donations increase during the economic downturn. The corporate sector can see that we are addressing a particular need that affects them: the skills and talent of young people. Our corporate donors have very specific objectives – such as engaging their staff with volunteering opportunities – so our aspiration is to develop a mutually beneficial relationship. We keep donors engaged and informed in a business-like way demonstrating the impact of The Prince's Trust in a clear and measurable way.

Our individual philanthropists are our second largest group of supporters. Our focus here is to reach donors emotionally and also to present the philanthropic business case to them. Our philanthropists are often very successful business people who have faced disadvantage themselves and can see that our approach will give young people another chance in life. Stewardship often involves the donor visiting programmes and meeting young people. Another approach is to set up a meeting with a trustee or the leadership team. It is always a bespoke approach based on their motivations for giving. We proactively seek major donors – although they do also approach us – having researched a number of charities or been recommended by a contact.

Both The Prince's Trust and other causes in The Prince's Charities have been fortunate enough to receive a small number of £1m donations over the years. We are always inspired and grateful when philanthropists choose to make a transformational gift like this.

At The Prince's Trust, we find that the best approach is to be honest with potential donors about the scale of the problem that we hope to address. For example we help 55,000 young people a year at The Prince's Trust, yet there are over one million young people not in education, employment or training who urgently need our support. By being honest, the donor can understand what they can achieve with their money, and may even be inspired to donate a significant amount.

At The Prince's Charities we know how important it is to have a clear understanding of expectations on both sides at the start of a partnership. The best supporter relationships are founded on honesty and a genuine synergy between the charity and supporter; delivering what you say you are going to do is of course, vitally important.

In the future, our strategy is to try to increase donations from individual philanthropists in order to expand our work. In addition, these supporters will also bring with them valuable assistance and expertise that we can use to leverage the impact of their gift. Individual philanthropists are often open to taking risks and supporting projects that are innovative and untested.

Our advice, both to charities and donors, is to ensure that there is an open dialogue at the start of a relationship so that the objectives of both parties are clearly articulated. For charities, we would say that it is vital to see fundraising as being something that all staff are involved in – many philanthropists will want to meet the senior team as well as the people on the frontline.

It is also important to have a clear and easy way to communicate strategic vision and to be bold and creative when asking for a gift.

We are also finding that impact measurement is ever more important for philanthropists, so we need to develop even better systems for evaluating the long-term benefits of our work with young people. For example, we have commissioned Social Return on Investment reports on our programmes which demonstrate the contribution to individuals, communities and societies in general.

For philanthropists, giving is often the best thing they have ever done, surpassing achievements in their business life and giving a great amount of satisfaction. For us at The Prince's Trust and The Prince's Charities, working with philanthropists is very fulfilling because we know what the money can achieve and we find it rewarding when a donor gets pleasure from the experience. It is often a bit like match-making as we connect a donor with a cause, and get to see the best of both worlds.”