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Engaging, Retaining, and Growing LitWorld's Young Professional Donor Base



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Diversifying the Donor Base

In nonprofit development, it is important to have diversified funding, meaning there is funding coming from multiple places, such as:

- Individual Donors
- Grants
- Partnerships

Even within those categories of funding, it is important to be diverse. **This Capstone focuses on diversifying LitWorld's individual donor base through engaging, retaining, and cultivating young professional donors.**

A guide was created for the organization which outlines two different projects which can be put in place to achieve a diversified young professional donor base. These projects are designed to be managed by LitWorld's Young Professional Group, in order to engage the group further, and because they are the best resource for these projects. The projects are: Fundraising Dinners for young professionals, aimed at meeting the objectives of growth and cultivation, and the creation of Giving Circles with the young professionals involved in LitWorld, aimed at meeting the objectives of retention and growth.

About LitWorld

LitWorld is an international literacy-focused nonprofit based in New York City that was founded by Pam Allyn in 2007. The mission of the organization is to empower young people to author lives of independence, hope, and joy. LitWorld's programs operate in 14 countries, different cities throughout the United States, and are continuously growing and expanding.¹

LitWorld's current donor base:

LitWorld currently has a strong and committed donor base, however a great deal of those donors are connected to the organization via the Executive Director and founder, Pam Allyn. As the organization looks to expand and grow, it needs to diversify its donor network to include young donors who will be dedicated to and involved with the organization, as well as being able to grow and age along with LitWorld.

The Young Professionals Group (YPG): LitWorld's Young Professionals Group has been in existence for 3 years and consists of 12 members. The YPG is for young professionals in New York City to be able to engage in LitWorld in a more involved way than a typical donor or volunteer. There is currently no donation requirement to be a member of the YPG, and, like LitWorld, the group is looking to expand and grow.



The Young Professional's Group on Giving Tuesday¹

Fundraising Dinners

In the guide, a fundraising dinner for young professionals based off of the FEAST² and PhilaSop³ models are recommended. The dinners involve a donation to attend (\$15-20) that goes towards LitWorld, and an educational component to teach the attendees about LitWorld. These community dinners, run by the Young Professionals Group, would help fulfill the overall goals of retention, growth, and cultivation through the following specific goals:

- To engage more young professionals with LitWorld and the Young Professionals Group (**growth, cultivation**)
- To teach young professionals about the benefits of LitWorld (**cultivation, retention**)
- To cultivate new, young donors for LitWorld (**cultivation**)
- To allow young professionals to network amongst each other (**cultivation**)
- To raise money for LitWorld or specific programs within

- LitWorld (**retention**)
- To further engage the Young Professionals Group with LitWorld programming and services (**growth, retention**)



A FEAST fundraising dinner in Brooklyn; an example of what a LitWorld fundraising dinner could look like²

Giving Circle

The second way presented in the guide to reach the goals of cultivation, growth, and retention is through the use of a giving circle model with the young professionals engaged with LitWorld. There is one main giving circle proposed, but the giving circle can be broken down if the size becomes too large.

The Young Professionals Group Giving Circle:

The YPG Giving Circle would be a requirement of members, which adds a required donation requirement to the YPG. The giving circle would meet quarterly at YPG meetings, and can fund LitWorld or YPG events and programs. The goals of this giving circle are:

Retention	Growth	Cultivation
Engaging YPG members in a different way	Establishing more of a structure and purpose to the YPG	Engaging young professionals by donating to LitWorld amongst peers and with a smaller individual donation

Jointly Achieving Goals

These projects can operate separately of each other, but can also work in conjunction with each other to achieve the overarching goals of the Capstone Project. It is specifically designed this way so that LitWorld and the YPG can incorporate these projects into their existing development and event plans as best works for them, with the long term goal being that these projects will operate in tandem. The ways in which the projects are designed to support each other are as follows:

- The young professionals who attend the Fundraising Dinners will be interested in engaging with LitWorld beyond the dinners.
- The Young Professionals Group, and specifically the giving circle, provides a great, engaging opportunity.
- The YPG Giving Circle can fund YPG projects, such as the Fundraising Dinners, making the dinners a more sustainable enterprise.



Opportunities

Incorporating a focus on young professional donors to LitWorld's development plan creates room for the donor base to diversify and grow with the organization. The Fundraising Dinners and YPG Giving Circle allow for the cultivation, growth, and retention of young professional donors. These projects fit in with LitWorld's current development activities, and allow all donors to continue to "be the story" through active and engaged giving.

Bibliography

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3. PhilaSop. (n.d.). Who We Are. Retrieved May 02, 2016, from <http://philasoup.org/aboutphilasoup/>