

CROWDFUNDING

FOR YOUR NEXT MUSIC PROJECT



My Experience

In late 2017 I launched a GoFundMe and MChanga crowdfunding campaign for my debut album 'Matriarch'. I had recently moved back to Kenya and decided to pursue music full-time. I desperately wanted to record a complete body of work ... but had no way to fund the specific vision that I had. After some discussion with people in my life I decided to start a crowdfunding campaign as a way to at least partially fund my work, as well as engage my community in my music process. I raised about \$5000 and was able to cover all my studio, session musician and some publishing and production costs.

At that time, and even now, crowdfunding for personal creative projects was not all that common in Kenya. I would love for that to change, and for people to see crowdfunding as a practical way to raise funds to create art in Africa. As always, I have to disclaim that these following insights are just some of my own personal thoughts, strategies and ideas on this topic.

Main Challenges

Some of the main challenges I faced were;

- Getting people on board to share about, and donate to, a personal music project without any prior knowledge of me or my music
- Sustaining DAILY posting and sharing of my campaign. (This is the hard bit yo!)
- Creating an consistently engaging story and ethos around my campaign and music project
- Budgeting the donations effectively

Phase One - Pre Campaign Launch



Step 1 - THE BIG QUESTIONS

So you've done the thing. You've committed to crowdfunding for your new, absolutely banging, project. Maybe you only have the demos right now, maybe the project is already half finished and you need to crowdfund to get it over the line; either way you have a project that needs an injection of funds, and you want your community, your fans and the world at large to be involved.

Here is a couple of questions to consider and answer before you even start to think about setting up your crowdfunding page. Grab a pen, open a google docs page: these questions are not rhetorical bb!

WHY?

This is the first big one. You need to have a strong 'why' - a strong motivation and story behind your campaign. This is what will drive you forward through the slog that is crowdfunding and will rally people to your cause. Some 'why'-s to answer:

- *Why is this specific project important?*
- *Why do I want to make this project?*
- *Why am I asking for help from my community?*
- *Why do I need to run a crowdfunding campaign?*

Some of these answers are for your eyes only, while others will form part of your crowdfunding page descriptions and copy.



WHAT?

- *What is my story? What is the story of this music project?*
- *What are my key words and descriptors for this campaign and project?*
- *What are my goals for this campaign? (Fiscal targets, online reach, social media targets, relational and social targets etc.)*
- *What will the contributions to this campaign go towards? Be specific! What is my budget?*
- *What do I want my supporters to feel as they engage with my campaign? What rewards will they get for contributing?*

As you go through these questions be as specific and detailed as you can in your answers. This is a brainstorming exercise that will give you clarity as you begin to formulate your fundraising plan. If you think of more questions feel free to add them to your list!

HOW?

- *How long will my campaign be? How will I create a sense of urgency?*
- *How will I consistently engage and update my audience throughout the campaign? How will I keep them invested?*
- *How will I reach new people and new audiences who are outside of my current community?*
- *How will I stay personally motivated and energised to keep sharing my campaign?*



WHO?

- Who is my target audience? (For both the campaign and my music)
- Who is part of my existing fanbase and network?
- Who will be on my team?

SOME NOTES ON THE TEAM

To touch on the last point a little more, a critical part of fundraising is understanding who is around you and who will be able to help push and support this campaign from **within** your existing network.

From the very beginning it's a good idea to have a literal list of who you are going to ask to help you. You will need to define and reach out to, at least, two groups;

- a group to **help with organisation and administration** throughout the fundraising window (this will be people you are close to and are good at admin, or people who already work for you)
- a group of people from your wider circle who you can call upon to share and keep **sharing your campaign across their networks**.

Step 2 - MAKE A PLAN, MAKE A SCHED.

Once you've answered the above questions and any other questions that they inspire, you should have a pretty good idea of what your campaign will look like. Everyone's targets, goals, timelines, aesthetics will be different. What's important is that you now have a foundation from which to plan. Next thing on the list - Create a list! Sick of me yet?

Start putting together a list of tasks to complete before and after you setup and launch your campaign. On the next page is an example list and schedule to give you some idea of where to start.

Crowdfunding checklist

- Choose a crowdfunding platform (GoFundMe, Mchanga etc)
- Create campaign page video
- Choose administration team
- Define key parameters of campaign (how much, how long)
- Write description of campaign
- Decide on donor rewards
- Create hashtag block for campaign
- Come up with catchy campaign title
- Make detailed budget breakdown and graphic
- Create content to share on social media on launch day
- Decide on colour scheme, font and overall aesthetic of camp.
- Start reaching out to inner circle about campaign
- Create posting schedule for length of campaign

Rough sched' idea

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
	1 CAMPAIGN LAUNCH publish campaign	2 Send campaign video to whatsapp list	3 Post new video on Tik Tok/Insta	4	5 Reach out to non-online network via phone	6 Post budget breakdown on socials
7 Go live on instagram-Q&A about campaign	8 One week down - email/social media blast	9	10 Update campaign page	12	13 Post new video on Tik Tok/Insta	14
15	16 Two weeks down- email/social media blast	17	18 Post new video on Tik Tok/Insta	19 Shine light on specific donors	20 Live concert and fundraiser	21 Reach out to non-online network via phone
22 Go live on instagram-Q&A about campaign	23 Final Push! email/social media blast	24	25 Update campaign page	26 Meet with inner circle to plan last 2 day push	27 Post new video on Tik Tok/Insta	28 CAMPAIGN LAST DAY
29 Send out thank yous to network	30 Film and publish thank you & review video	31 Make a plan for donor rewards				

Step 3 - SET UP YOUR CAMPAIGN & CAMPAIGN VIDEO

Once your checklist and schedule is complete, setting up the campaign will mostly involve transplanting that information into your campaign page back-end. Whatever site you've chosen as your central crowdfunding platform, once you create an account and started a campaign your main tasks will be:

- Uploading your campaign video
- Inputting your catchy and unique campaign title
- Inputting your financial target and duration of campaign
- Setting up your donor rewards
- Publishing your campaign description (and budget breakdown) below the video

SOME NOTES ON THE VIDEO



The campaign video is a critical, central part of this process. Do not leave this to the last minute! Give it your time, attention and creativity. Attention spans online are getting shorter with every passing year. That being said, this campaign video is unlike any other content video you will post through the duration of your campaign. **The campaign video will live on your page and will be your donors first point of context when they click through.**

While it should definitely be succinct, dynamic and creative, its main goal is to give the potential donors insight into you, your music, your project and *why this fundraiser matters*. Be creative! I've included some button links below to some music campaign videos I quickly found and thought were interesting and left an impact.

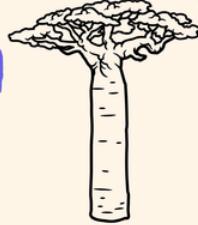
IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER
WE WILL DIVE INTO PART II
OF CROWDFUNDING FOR
THE ARTS - POST
CAMPAIGN LAUNCH!

THE GARDEN

"CONVERSATIONS"

"SAY LESS"

THERE IS NOTHING MORE AFRICAN THAN CROWDFUNDING



Crowdfunding is in no way a Western invention, yet the idea of crowdfunding specifically for the Arts still has a long way to go in Africa to become as commonplace as it is in the West.

One thing that was very evident to me when I crowdfunded in 2017 was the different *initial responses and engagement* between my western audience and my Kenyan (and wider East-African) audiences. There seemed to be confusion from my Kenyan audience and community as to why I was crowdfunding and what contributing towards an artistic project and process meant. This is only because **arts fundraising in particular is not very common within our communities**. This is something I truly think should, can and will change with time.

African cultures and communities across the continent have many versions of this idea of the collective putting money towards the goals, needs and ambitions of the individual. It is built into the fabric of how many of our communities operate, how they were built, how people get married, how we respond to death, how young people are sent to university, how businesses are started etc.

There is something powerful that happens when a community rallies behind someone's dream. We have proven the **profitability and independence** that can be achieved through artistic careers. Artists are core members of a culture's social history and record-keeping. They are creators. They have been a part of communities for as long as any other profession, vocation, position - perhaps longer!

Another big problem for African artists attempting to crowdfund is that few crowdfunding platforms centre the needs and goals of African artists specifically. Both Kickstarter and Indiegogo (which are artist-centric platforms) do not operate in any African countries. M-changa, though it is a great option for Kenya based people, is focused more on fundraising for social and medical causes.

Hopefully there will one day be an Africa-artist centric crowdfunding platform that addresses the needs, limitations, cultural contexts and specific goals of African artists. Some things to chew on as you begin your journey! We dream of progress!