GoFundMe and Donorbox take a cut of every donation and own the donor relationship. A self-hosted fundraising system means 100% of contributions reach your organization—minus only the payment-gateway fee—and every donor record stays in a database you control.

Why Donor Data Belongs to You

A hosted fundraising platform is convenient until you look at what you give up. The platform takes a percentage of every gift, controls the donor contact list, and decides how—and whether—you can export that data when you leave. A self-hosted system puts the organization back in charge. Every name, email, donation amount, and recurring schedule lives in your own database. You segment it, query it, and retain it for as long as it has value—regardless of any third-party's pricing changes or terms-of-service updates.

Over time, a donor list is one of the most valuable assets a non-profit or community project can build. Owning it outright changes the economics of every future campaign, appeal, and annual report.

How the Donation Workflow Runs

A visitor lands on a branded donation page—either a general form or a specific campaign with its own goal, start date, and end date. They choose a pre-defined amount or enter a custom figure, select one-time or recurring (daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly), and optionally add tribute or dedication details. Payment routes through any of more than 45 gateways—PayPal, Stripe Checkout, Authorize.net, Mollie, Square, and dozens more . After the transaction clears, the donor receives a customizable confirmation email and an automatically generated PDF receipt for tax purposes.

On the admin side, a dashboard surfaces the latest donations, charts, and key performance indicators at a glance. Donors can be searched, filtered, edited, approved, or exported to CSV. The entire cycle—from landing page to thank-you email—runs on your own infrastructure with no per-transaction platform fee layered on top of the gateway cost.

What's on the Feature List

- One-time and recurring donations with configurable frequencies
- Unlimited campaigns with goals, dates, and visual thermometer progress bars
- Child campaigns that roll up into a parent goal
- 45+ payment gateways
- Multi-step donation form with conditional custom fields (9 field types)
- Automatic PDF receipt generation for every donation
- Anonymous donation option and donor-covers-fee toggle
- Gift Aid support for UK-based organizations
- QR code generation for offline-to-online campaign links
- Social media sharing and email-a-friend functionality
- Frontend campaign creation and management for logged-in users
- Min/max donation limits per campaign

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- Donor CSV export/import and PDF export
- Built-in multi-language translation for campaigns, forms, and emails
- GDPR-compliant data handling and spam-detection plugin

Campaigns, Thermometers, and Reporting

Each campaign is its own mini landing page: a description, a photo, a goal amount, and a thermometer bar that fills in real time as donations arrive. Campaigns can be time-limited, capped by donor count, or left open-ended. Child campaigns nest under a parent so that a large initiative—say, a building fund—can break into named phases while the parent thermometer tracks the combined total.

On the reporting side, visual charts and key performance indicators let you compare campaigns, track monthly trends, and identify your highest-value donors. Revenue data exports to CSV or PDF for board reports. A statistics dashboard available to frontend campaign owners gives them visibility without requiring backend access—useful when multiple departments or chapters are running concurrent fundraising drives. Email logs track every message the system sends, so if a receipt bounces or a confirmation goes missing, you can diagnose the problem without guessing.

Modules, Plugins, and Integrations

The donation form can be embedded directly inside any article or page-builder block using a content plugin—no need to route visitors to a separate URL. Companion modules display a thermometer widget, a latest-donors feed, a top-donors leaderboard, or a campaign list anywhere in the template. A newsletter plugin syncs donors with your mailing-list software, and community plugins surface donation history inside your community extension.

For organizations that need a gateway not already in the library, the open-source codebase makes custom payment-plugin development straightforward—or the vendor offers bespoke gateway builds on request.

Who Uses This and How

Non-profits run annual giving campaigns with goal thermometers on the homepage and recurring monthly-donor programs that auto-renew without staff intervention. Churches and religious organizations accept tithes and building-fund pledges with Gift Aid reclaim for UK donors. Schools and alumni associations launch capital campaigns where child campaigns represent individual projects. Community groups and open-source projects embed a simple donation form in a sidebar module—no campaign structure needed, just a payment button and a thank-you email. Political campaigns run time-limited drives with public thermometers and social sharing that turns each donor into a referral channel.

The Trade-Off

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Self-hosting removes the platform commission, but it means you own the compliance burden. PCI-safe payment processing is handled by the gateways themselves, yet SSL certificates, data-privacy obligations, and server maintenance are your responsibility. The upfront cost is a one-time license fee rather than a percentage of every gift—a trade that pays for itself the first time a single campaign exceeds a few hundred dollars in donations.

Extension referenced in this article:

Joom Donation by Joomdonation (Ossolution Team)?•?joomdonation.com

Leading donation and fundraising extension for the CMS. One-time and recurring donations, unlimited campaigns with thermometer progress bars, 45+ payment gateways , PDF receipts, custom fields, QR codes, multi-language, GDPR-compliant, and comprehensive reporting. 289 reviews on the JED.

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