

THE BIG AMNESTY SKILL SHARE



EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGNING

CREATE A SCENE

A well-chosen prop or costume can transform your campaign into an eye-catching, crowd-gathering occasion that can help you get media coverage and have a bigger impact. Amnesty groups around the UK are fantastic at creating a scene! Here we share some of their tips and creative campaigning ideas...

SIMPLE YET EFFECTIVE...

These activists kept it simple by donning a white mask and holding up the 'No recourse No safety' leaflets when they demonstrated outside the Home Office to ask the UK government to drop the no recourse to public funds rule for women suffering violence.



CHECKLIST

- ▶ **Get creative** Brainstorm a broad range of ideas – as well as getting lots of ideas out, this process will reveal people's skills, knowledge, interests and creativity.
- ▶ **Your objectives** Narrowing down ideas can be difficult, but keep in mind what you want to achieve. Is it 100 petition signatures? Local media coverage? More supporters? MP quote?
- ▶ **A clear message** You may know what your scene is about, but it usually has to be very clear to the passing public, or a press photographer.
- ▶ **Timing** It is useful to take advantage of a date everyone knows – Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Bonfire night. Or it could be a date specific to your campaign but less well known. Think about a date and time when it is likely there will be lots of people about to see you!
- ▶ **Venue** An interesting place can help draw attention to your message. It could be a famous building, or a relevant or contrasting setting. You may need to get permission – check with your local council.
- ▶ **Action** Work with what you have and be imaginative - you don't need lots of people to hold a large banner or mount 20 pictures. You need to capture people's attention and there is a lot of competition for this so go for something unusual, huge, or repeated.

EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGNING

DEFINITELY NOT RUBBISH

The Buxton group invited passers-by to tear up pictures of guns and put them in a black dustbin. Over 100 people took part and a third of them agreed to have their photo taken for the 'Million Faces' petition.

TOP TIP

Keep it simple. Before you start working on your prop think about whether it expresses a simple idea... would it work as a photo in the paper?

You also need to consider the weather – will your prop blow away, get sodden? Do what you can to minimise the risks!



WITH LOVE FROM AMNESTY

The Woking group celebrated Valentine's Day by handing out red paper flowers in the town square. To highlight Amnesty's campaign to Stop Violence Against Women, each flower had a label pointing out some of the shocking statistics on violence against women in the UK.

TOP TIP

How can you emphasise your point? Use a clear slogan or a shocking statistic. Make it punchy if you can!



RESOURCES

The Amnesty office has all kinds of props, materials and resources available for loan – from cages to Guantanamo boiler suits and white masks to banners. Contact the activism team if you need help sourcing a prop! Tel 020 7003 1675 Email activism@amnesty.org.uk

AUSTEN POWER

The Bath Group collected signatures on an 11 foot petition, calling on the UK government to close loopholes in export controls that allow companies to export torture equipment.

Signatories included participants in the Jane Austen promenade (which takes place every summer for tourists), who were happy to divert their procession to sign up.



TOP TIP

Is there a local event taking place? Something organised by someone else that you can hook into could ensure that you get a big audience.

MOVE YOUR BODY!

Activists in Birmingham donned orange jumpsuits and re-enacted some stress positions.



TOP TIP

If you are hoping for TV coverage then think about what they will need – they will want a sense of movement and theatre. Activists chained together outside the Town Hall might make a good picture for the paper, but if you go through the town centre in procession or enact some simple street theatre then you might interest the TV cameras – and don't forget that they will need an interviewee to explain what the action is all about.

PRICKING THE CONSCIENCE

In Somerset, the Frome youth group went on sale in shop windows dressed as child soldiers, agricultural labourers and sex workers, getting a town full of Saturday shoppers to sign up to support victims of human trafficking.

TOP TIP

Human stories can really bring an issue alive and are very useful for interviews. Don't forget to use Amnesty cases in your campaigning. Try to make a link between their story and your local setting



EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGNING

Now that you've put all that effort into creating your scene, you need to entice the local media to cover your event...

WRITING A PRESS RELEASE

The overworked journalist will give your release a maximum of 30 seconds – you've got just that long to grab their attention!

LAYOUT

- ▶ Use one side of A4 only
- ▶ Use large margins – if the journalist prints it out, they will want room to write notes in the margins
- ▶ After the headline, use plain text only – no bolds, underlines, italics etc.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION AT THE TOP

- ▶ Amnesty International [Local Group name]
- ▶ Date
- ▶ Eye catching headline with local focus if possible

KEY MESSAGE

- ▶ The first paragraph is the most important – this is your opportunity to grab their attention
- ▶ Put most of your effort into your headline and the key message
- ▶ Don't forget the Who, What, Where, When, Why of your event

A QUOTE

Clearly attributable that the journalist can use

DON'T FORGET YOUR CONTACT DETAILS!

FURTHER INFORMATION

Don't assume knowledge – provide them with additional facts, statistics and where they can get further information from

TOP TIP

Bring a camera so you have photos. If the press photographer does not turn up you can still send them the images – and don't forget to send a copy to Amnesty so we can share your ideas!

PRESS RELEASE

**For immediate release:
Saturday 8 March 2008**

WHO MADE YOUR EASTER EGG?

Manchester Amnesty asks Easter Egg lovers to buy Fair Trade, to help abolish child labour in chocolate manufacturing.

Members of Manchester Amnesty International will dress in Easter costumes and give out Fair Trade chocolate from 2pm on Saturday 15 March in Market Street to alert Easter egg buyers to the human rights abuses still prevalent in the production of chocolate.

Kate Towner from Manchester group said: 'Amnesty understands that children are still being forced to work on cocoa farms in West Africa, in spite of a pledge by the world's biggest chocolate companies years ago to eradicate forced child labour. I know the chocolate lovers of Manchester will support Amnesty in opposing child slavery, for what is, after all, a luxury item. We hope people will be encouraged to buy Fair Trade chocolate Easter eggs this year, which is now widely available in our shops, to help put an end to these atrocities.'

ENDS.

More information:
Kate Towner 01234 56789
www.manchester.amnesty.org.uk

Additional information for the Editor: