

THE BIG AMNESTY SKILL SHARE



EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGNING

ORGANISING AN EVENT

Organising an event is a great way to spread the word about human rights, raise money for Amnesty and publicise your group. You should gain some new members as a result, too. Here are some simple things you can do to make your event run smoothly.

WHETHER YOU ARE NEW TO EVENT ORGANISING OR AN OLD HAND, BEAR IN MIND THE FIVE W'S.

► WHY

Why are you holding this event? What do you hope to achieve? Set yourself clear aims and objectives. Do you want to generate media coverage, encourage people to sign up to a campaign action or to raise money – or all of the above? Remain focussed and it will be much simpler to plan.

► WHAT

What type of event is it? A tea or coffee morning, public meeting or music night?

► WHERE

Select a suitable venue and book well in advance. Ask if the venue can help you at all, eg with equipment or publicity. Make sure it has good access, eg for wheelchairs. Do they offer discounts to non-governmental organisations?

► WHEN

Choose the date carefully, giving yourself enough time to organise everything. Avoid competing with other local or national events. Think about holding it on a significant date such as Human Rights Day in December or International Women's Day in March – this helps with media interest.

► WHO

Who is the event for? Who do you want to influence? Design your publicity materials to entice them. Who will do all the work? Don't try to do everything yourself.

EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGNING

ORGANISING AN EVENT CHECKLIST

1. SET UP A PROJECT GROUP

Organising an event involves juggling a number of different activities in parallel. Work in a team. Decide how often your group will meet to discuss progress and if possible set up an email group to share information and updates.

2. PREPARE A TIMELINE

Ensure that everyone involved in organising the event has a clearly defined role, and a deadline. Devise a timeline listing everything that needs to be done by when, and tick things off as you go.

3. AGREE A BUDGET

Draw up a budget and stick to it. Set out your planned income and expenditure (venue hire, audio-visual equipment, catering, print and mailing costs, materials for campaign action, travel expenses for speakers). Try to cover costs or better still make a profit. Identify ways that you can reduce costs, eg venue discount? Get local businesses involved in sponsorship, prizes, loan of equipment or premises. In return offer them free publicity, but choose carefully and keep ethical matters in mind. Keep records of your expenditure.

4. FIND A VENUE

Select and book a suitable venue and confirm nearer the time to avoid double bookings. Check what facilities are included and the venue has the required licence and insurance. If possible, arrange for your team to visit the venue for a reece in advance.

5. SET A DATE

Choose carefully, giving yourself enough time to organise your event.

6. DRAFT A PROGRAMME

Draft an event's programme and a separate events plan; give everyone involved a copy with names, where they need to be and responsibilities clearly marked.

7. APPROACH SPEAKERS

Amnesty speakers are available, but also contact local campaigning groups, eg women's or refugee organisations. Prepare a briefing for each speaker to discuss, amend and finalise. Agree how travel arrangements and accommodation is being paid for at the outset.

8. AGREE BOOKING SYSTEM

Set up a system for bookings – what information do you want to capture and how will you store this? Are you charging for this event? What payment types are you able to accept? Will you be offering discounts, eg to early bookers and large bookings/concessions?

EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGNING

9. PRODUCE PUBLICITY

Who do you want to attract to the event? Does your promotional material work for a variety of audiences or are you able to tailor the promotion to different audiences, eg Trade Union affiliates, young people. Do your speakers attract locals and the local media? Make the most of the existing channels available, eg the Groups newsletter and Amnesty website, where you can upload details of your event directly on to the Events section.

10. CATERING

Will you be providing food? If so, make sure you make a note of dietary requirements when taking bookings. Who will be in charge of this?

11. AUDIO VISUAL

The venue may be able to provide laptops and projectors. Your local council's community development team may be able to lend equipment to you.



12. MATERIALS/BRANDING

Make a list of the materials you need for your event – the practical (signage, evaluation forms, stationary) and action (posters, action cards, campaign leaflets, exhibition posters, banners). See Key Materials for Local Groups leaflet. Make sure the Amnesty brand is visible, eg Amnesty placards around the venue.

13. TELL THE MEDIA

Send out a press release a week before your event. Ensure there is someone there to welcome press. Take photographs to include Amnesty branding and send to the local paper and Activism Team so we can feature you in the Groups newsletter.

14. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Any event has associated risks. Familiarise yourself with emergency procedures including fire safety and evacuation. Ensure that you or the venue has public liability insurance. AIUK local groups are covered by our public liability insurance for most events – more details are available from the Activism Team.

15. EVALUATION FORM

Collect evaluation forms to help you with your future events – if you feel you can do another one!

16. FOLLOW UP

Say thank you to everyone – particularly speakers and performers outside your group – and tell them how much you raised.

EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGNING

CAMBRIDGE AMNESTY GROUP PLAN AN EVENT... HOW THEY DID IT

'We decided to focus on the 'no recourse to public funds' campaign (NRPF).

We took about two months to plan our actions. We

made contact with the people working on the broader NRPF issue locally and the county's domestic violence partnership. We also talked to Women's Aid to find out about the local situation. Our aim was to raise awareness of the issue, getting both local people and local officials to understand and want to act on the situation. We wanted to use this local support to help persuade the government to act.

Our idea was to have a group of people dressed in black wearing white mouthless masks and standing silently in the busy city centre. We also wanted to collect signatures so we decided to have a stall and some sort of opening ceremony. We chose a Saturday during the 16 days of action on violence against women, just before the end of term for our action.

We contacted various well known figures who we thought might be interested in helping. We managed to secure some key people, the local MP, one of East Anglia's MEPs and the head of the local council. They each agreed to give a short speech in support of our campaign.

Publicity for the event was very important. We liaised with the University's women's officer who set up a student website on the issue. We also set up a Facebook event, made fliers which we left in cafes and cinemas and sent copious emails out asking people to come along. Finally, we wrote a press release and sent it out to all the local papers, radio and TV stations with an email asking for coverage.

With a week to go we had an offer of a radio interview. This was recorded in advance and excerpts played in the station's news bulletins the day before the action. The local paper agreed to cover the issue and sent a photographer. About 20 lovely people agreed to stand in the cold and wear the white masks – the most effective resource for recruiting volunteers does appear to be face to face rather than our fliers and letters. Photography students from the local college agreed to take photographs. We made large red and white 'No entry' style signs for the protesters to carry. We secured a microphone and a DIY sound system, a large umbrella to shelter our speakers and lots of other useful things like council permission and clipboards.

At our last meeting we looked at our checklist, designated the roles everyone would play on the day and worked out how people could stand to most effectively draw a crowd.

The day of the action went well. Lots of people stopped to listen and ask questions. We raised over 800 signatures for Amnesty's campaign and also got an article in the Cambridge Evening News and a video of the event on their website.'



Cambridge Amnesty Group

SUPPORT FROM THE OFFICE

The Activism and Fundraising teams can provide support for your event by:

- Assisting with publicity/mailings
- Adding your event to the website
- Sourcing materials for your event
- Giving you information on Public Liability Insurance and risk assessments

E: activism@amnesty.org.uk T: 020 7033 1675

E: fundraise@amnesty.org.uk T: 020 7033 1650

The Media Team can also help and advise you on working with local press. E: press@amnesty.org.uk T: 020 7033 1543