

PLANNING AND PUTTING ON EVENTS

People:	The members of the group organising events
Time:	Depends on the event being planned
Resources:	This activity sheet and a place to meet

How can this help us?

Putting on local events are the way to raise awareness of Transition and get people involved. They help you to build community support for Transition and depending on the type of event can highlight the issues that Transition is attempting to address locally. This guide can help you to do this successfully.

The guide:

How to put on good events:

The following outlines suggestions to help you create good events.

Helpful questions for designing events:

- Who do you want to come?
- How will you reach the different groups in the community, especially those who are marginalised?
- Do you need to translate anything?
- Where you will promote the event to ensure the widest possible audience?

What are you hoping to achieve:

- You need to be clear about what you want to come out of event
- Can this event raise awareness of issues around Transition? If so how
- Do you want to recruit new members, or build community support?
- Can it meet many objectives, for instance –
 - oEngaging the community
 - oRaising awareness of Transition
 - oIncreasing the visibility of your group
 - oInfluencing people
 - oProviding a learning experience for local people
 - oProvide a networking opportunity to work with other local groups
 - oIncluding marginalised groups

Find a suitable venue:

- The venue needs to be big enough to accommodate everyone comfortably, but not too big. It can be very disempowering when you have hired a huge space and only twenty people turn up

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- Ensure the venue for your meeting is accessible - can someone in a wheelchair, or with hearing difficulties participate as easily as possible?
- Might the venue itself put some people off (pubs and venues with religious affiliations can have this effect)?
- Make sure you put clear directions to the venue on your publicity

When is a good time to put on the event:

- Consider the people you want to attract and think about when they could attend
- Generally it would be either a day, evening, or weekend event
- If you choose a time that you know will be challenging for certain people, then consider what could be done to help them to attend, for example providing childcare

Timetable and Budget:

Work out:

- How much is it going to cost and can you cover the costs?
- When you need to book the venue or the speaker
- What equipment will you need, projector, speakers, microphones etc.
- When do you need to start publicising the event?

Legal / financial issues:

- Do you need insurance and if so who has it?
- There may be special requirements if you're working with children
- Be clear about who's carrying any financial risk and where any profit goes

Roles / Practical issues:

- Look at what needs doing and make sure that people are fulfilling those tasks
- It can often be useful for one person to plan and coordinate the event

Some roles/tasks to consider:

- Who will carry out the following tasks to put on the event:
 - oWho will book the venue, know who has the key and what's the emergency contact?
 - oSort out equipment needed, projector and screen, laptop, dvd player, speakers, etc.
 - oIf having a speaker, How are they getting to the venue, where are they staying, how long are they speaking for, who will introduce them?
 - oIf you're showing a film, who is getting a copy, are you allowed to show it, have you paid the screening fee, have checked the format and tested all the equipment together?
- Who will produce online (social media/ website etc) and offline publicity (posters/ fliers) and ensure that it is distributed?
- Who is going to introduce and close the event?
- Who will set out and clear away chairs?
- Is someone providing drinks, will they need kettle, cups, teas and coffee etc.?
- Who will welcome new people, answer questions and take emails or contact info?

The following are some tips to think about when advertising an event:

- Think about who you are aiming to invite and how best to tell them about it
- The publicity needs to be placed where they can see it
- Is your publicity explicitly welcoming people?
 - Does it encourage people to get involved, to offer their own ideas?
 - Think about the image you are presenting - work on being friendly, interesting and active
- Include all the important details: where, when, what the purpose of the meeting is, who is organising it and contact details including a telephone number
- Don't rely totally on email to send out invites unless you are certain that everyone has internet access and checks it regularly
- Many groups decide the time and place of the next meeting at the end of the current one, remember to contact the 'regulars' that couldn't make that meeting

For some groups, especially those who are marginalised, a flyer, poster or email will be unlikely to get them to attend. Consider initiating conversations about the event early on with people from marginalised communities to find out their perspectives on the themes of the event and explore with them how the event might become more relevant to their community. Ask for their support in promoting it within their community.

Make sure you publicise it well using the following:

- Press release to local media including radio and newspapers
- Websites and social media (Facebook, Twitter etc)
- Leaflets
- Email list / bulletin
- Other organisations' notice boards or bulletins
- Include the date, venue, cost, times, the nature of the event, and your group's contact details on all communication.

What the event will look like and the best way to run it:

Think about the difference between the really engaging, inspiring, enjoyable events you've been to and the ones which were a bit dull. What made the difference? Here are some suggestions.

- Start your event by asking people to meet one or two people next to them who they don't know and share names, and why they've come
- After a talk/film/presentation, invite people to come together in groups of 3 to 4 people to talk about it. You're likely to get a wider range of people asking more thought out questions
- It's perfectly natural to feel emotional in response to hard-hitting information, so create some space for that, rather than pretending it doesn't exist
- Manage Q&As or a discussion session well so that people can reflect on their response (it's not only the speakers who are 'experts'), and so that people who want to hijack the discussion to push a strong agenda aren't able to do so (the "windbag" phenomenon). Learning to interrupt people respectfully is a great skill!
- Make introductions and thanks brief and relevant. Find a positive note to end on
- Announce future events at the end but keep it really short or it will sap the energy

Head, heart and hands principle:

"Often in Transition we use the term "head, heart and hands", It might be something useful to bear in mind when you are designing an event, especially when it is one that introduces people to potentially distressing information, i.e. a film about climate change. Try to ensure a balance between hard information (the head), with space to digest it with other people and talk about the feelings it generates (the heart), alongside an invitation to play a part in doing something about it (the hands). Such a balance is vital to ensure sustained momentum and is one of the things that is particular to Transition.

As Naomi Klein put it recently: "if you're going to collapse peoples' world views, you have to stick around to pick up the pieces".

Do ask for financial support for your group at the event:

- This can be through standing orders, donations or whatever
- See if anyone is willing to directly ask people, face to face, this is much more effective than general announcements and emails

How to get new people involved:

Make sure you have a way of people getting involved with your Transition group at the event:

- Have your next meeting setup so that you invite people to, ideally with a date and venue
- Take peoples contact details so you can contact them to let them know about future meetings and send them information on Transition

After the event: Meet up and discuss how it went, consider:

- Was the publicity effective?
- What went well?
- What could have been done better?
- Are there extra things to add to this checklist?

Record the venue information:

Create your own local Events information sheet which any group could use. Include venue contact information, sources of equipment, and your own tips.

More support:

For more support and information on community involvement go here:

<http://transitionnetwork.org/do-transition/starting-transition/7-essential-ingredients/community-involvement/>

Check out the 7 essential ingredients of Transition here:

<http://transitionnetwork.org/do-transition/starting-transition/7-essential-ingredients/>

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