

Organising Effective Events

Purpose

The single biggest reason why time, energy and money is wasted organising events is because there is not a shared, clear purpose of why the event is being organised. Before taking any other steps or making any other decisions, decide this as a group. Function before form!

- What is the purpose of the event?
- What is the function?
- What are you trying to achieve?
- Do you have any desired outcomes?
- Is it the right event for what you are trying to achieve?
- Does your group have consensus on the aims of the event and share the vision?
- Now you have a clear purpose, how will it inform the design of your event?

People

It is very important to think about who is involved in your event, before it happens, so that you can tailor your energy and also so that you can ensure you have the human resources to make it happen.

Externally:

- Who is the event aimed at?
- Who do you want to be there and be part of it? Be specific.
- What are their values? Will you appeal to them?

Internally:

- How much human energy do you have to organise the event? Lots of volunteers or a very small few?
- Who will you need on the day/night?
- Does your group have the skills to facilitate or will you need support?
- How will you care for each other through the organising process to avoid burnout?

Place

The time and place of an event can have a huge influence on its success. When planning where your event will take place, it is important to think about:

- Where will the event take place? Why there?
- What does the venue communicate about your group?
- Does the place support your function?
- Is it large enough?
- Is it accessible to who you want to reach?
- What role will the venue play in your event? Can it support you achieve your aims? E.g. a smallholding for a local food course.
- Is there a natural season that works well for your event? Some event organisers even consider the moon cycle and its effect on people!

Publicity

Knowing your purpose will help you decide your publicity platforms and how to best target your efforts. It is likely for every event that a few people will come from a few different mediums. Different types of publicity include:

- Physical posters & leaflets
- Word of mouth (don't underestimate it!)
- Websites
- Newspapers & magazines
- Door-dropping leaflets
- Social media including facebook and twitter
- Blogging
- Radio
- Email newsletters & discussion lists
- Independent media sites such as Indymedia

Ask yourself: Is your message clear? Are all essential bits of information obvious?
• Is your graphic design attractive? What does it communicate about you?

Power

Many event organisers don't think about power, privilege and participation, and so time and time again the same faces turn up and people listen passively to speakers at the front. For those organising events to transform the food system or work for other social change, we need to consider:

- Is the event accessible (in multiple ways)?
- Will it help to redistribute power & address inequalities, or will it perpetuate them?
- How will people participate?
- Will there be a safer spaces policy? How will you deal with racist, sexist and other oppressive behaviour?
- Will the event be empowering?

Price

Unfortunately, money can be a hugely limiting factor in organising events. When organising an effective event, it's really integral to consider:

- What is your budget?
- What is your break even point?
- Do you have money available beforehand, or does everything need to come from the day?
- Will you have a deadline for bookings?
- If you have a booking system, which one will you use?
- What is something that could reduce your workload or stress that you could potentially outsource?
- Is your event financially accessible? Will you design for any bursaries or financial support, such as a sliding scale?

Growing Resilience



Building a socially-just, ecologically sustainable food system in Somerset