

TIME FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

ORGANISING EVENTS

Why hold an event?

- Get your campaign noticed.
- Give your campaign momentum.
- Provide your campaign with a focus.
- Win new volunteers.

Campaign events range from the traditional to the wacky. How about...?

- A special service at your place of worship where elected representatives attend or congregations sign a letter on their way out.
- A photo stunt to draw attention to climate change.
- An exhibition of photography, art or fashion that brings a community together around an issue, with a campaign action for people to take away at the end.

Prepare

Invite any special guest(s), book your venue, and arrange refreshments and resources. You might open by giving a short speech, or invite a speaker from a charity or a church, or a community leader to open proceedings. If asking someone else to speak, brief him or her thoroughly and well in advance.

Publicise

Make posters and leaflets about the event, advertise it in relevant newsletters and make sure you invite all of your own friends and family, as well as promoting it over relevant email lists, social media and via press releases.



Band Relentless Craving perform as part of Christian Rocks! an event in Blackburn. During the concert the audience was encouraged to sign a campaign action card.

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On the day

Use this checklist to ensure your event is a success.

- Does everyone know who is doing what?
- Who is meeting any guest speakers?
- Is all the necessary equipment arranged and tested – including extension cables?
- Can you turn the lights off in the venue (for film screenings)? Do you know where the switches are?
- Do your speakers know how long they've got? Who will prompt them to speed up if they start to over run? And do they have everything they need?
- Are you allowing time for questions?
- Who is introducing, seating and thanking guests?
- Will people be given a campaign action or a goody bag to take away?
- Who is supervising parking or drop-off points for coaches?
- Who is doing the food?
- Has someone arranged change if tickets or products are on sale? Who is collecting and banking the money?
- Who is talking to the police about your event (if it involves large crowds, closing roads or if there is a risk of people attempting to hijack your plans)?
- Do you know where the toilets are and what the fire evacuation procedures are? And how will you communicate this?
- Will your mobile get a signal in the venue?
- Who is talking to the media, and what will they say?
- What is your back-up plan if the band doesn't turn up, if it rains and so on?
- Who holds the keys for your event venue and who has this person's phone number?
- Who will clean up after the event?
- How will you gather feedback on your event?
- Can you repeat your event next year?

Report back

After your event, you could write a letter to your local newspaper reporting what happened – try to take some photos so you can send these too. Consider writing a longer account for a faith magazine, a newsletter, on a blog or on a social networking website. You could also tell a local radio phone-in about it, or simply write an email to all of your friends.

Don't forget to let Christian Aid know how it went.

GUIDE TO LOCAL MEDIA WORK

Make the media work for you

Building a healthy relationship with local media is probably one of the easiest and most cost-effective ways of getting your campaign message out. Local media are always on the look out for stories to fill their pages, particularly those that are relevant to their audience or involve human interest.

How does your event or campaign make a link between global issues and your local community? Timing is important.

Your local newspapers, radio and TV stations work to their own deadlines and it will take them time to process your information.

Remember, 'media' doesn't just mean broadsheets. It means your church newsletter, local newspapers and radio stations, nearby student newspapers and the online world.

Press release: a simple way to alert your local media that something is going on.

- Put all the essential information in the first two paragraphs, or, if you can, in the first!
- Who, what, why, when and where are the essential questions the press release should address.
- Why is it interesting? Is there a local angle you can exploit?
- Include a quote from the organiser explaining why you are holding the event and its importance.
- Include a paragraph about the campaign.
- Include your contact details at the end.
- Call up your local media outlet and ask to speak to the news desk, take a note of their email address and then send the press release to them in the body of the email.
- Once you have sent it to your local newspaper, call them up a few days later to check they have received it, and ask if you can write an opinion piece for them. Emphasise again what you are doing, why, and why it is interesting.
- Try and get a direct number – a mobile if possible – for a contact on the news desk and give them yours again. Check if they are sending photographers to your event.
- Don't forget to write up the report for newsletters or publications that might accept an article, such as your local church newsletter, school newsletter or website.

Sample press release

CITIZENS TO GRILL LOCAL CANDIDATES ON THEIR CLIMATE POLICIES

Toytown residents will gather at the town hall on 1 April at 7.30pm to probe local election candidates on their green credentials. The debate will give people in the area the chance to have their concerns over climate change addressed by candidates.

Give details of which candidates will be there, any charities involved and who will chair the meeting.

Toytown vicar Paul Burgess, who will be joining the event today, said: 'Climate change is killing 300,000 people a year, mostly in poor countries. I want my vote to go towards reversing this crisis, so I will choose the candidate with the most promising set of ideas for tackling the issue.'

ENDS

Notes

- 1 For more information, please call (*your telephone number*) or email (*your email address*)
- 2 To find out more about Christian Aid, go to www.christianaid.org.uk

In addition to sending a press release, you may decide you want to hold a photo call – a shoot staged to capture a particular scene. A photo is a highly effective way of communicating a message, so think of an interesting idea that will illustrate the reason for your event. Try not to have too many people in the picture – limit this to four, unless you have decided to use a large crowd shot.

Use a photo call notice to let people know where and when the shoot will take place and what will be in the photo. Send this to the picture desk of the newspaper (if they have one) two or three days before the event and follow up with a phone call the day before. Always try to hold a photo call in the morning so that it can make the evening news deadlines.

Even if you don't have an event to publicise in the press, you can write a letter for publication, perhaps responding to a local story and making the link to your campaign issue.

Please let Christian Aid know about any media coverage you achieve, and if possible send us a copy of this!