



ORGANIZING AN EVENT

Events that are run to raise money need to be very carefully planned; for every successfully run event, there is one that has lost money. Be clear on the purpose of the event: is it to raise as much money as you can; to raise the public profile of the organization; to attract supporters for the organization; a 'thank you' for your existing supporters and volunteers? Whatever the purpose, the event must give enjoyment in return for money.

In some countries 10% of the population attend events run by not-for-profit organizations each year. Some attend simply because of the event, while others consider it a way of supporting your organization.

The organization provides the purpose for the event. It attracts the involvement of those who believe in the aims of the organization. The reputation of the organization can greatly affect participation of the performers. The support which VIPs and celebrities give to the organization can help to generate publicity for the event and can also attract sponsors.

Advantages and disadvantages of fundraising events

Advantages:

- The event can be selected and developed to maximize your organization's resources and objectives.
- Large and small financial needs, and short- and long-term funding can be secured through the successful implementation of an appropriate event.
- The event can be local and communitybased, national, or even international.
- An event presents great opportunities for publicizing the organization and cause.
- An event provides a focus and opportunity to involve your supporters.
- People enjoy attending events and through them you can attract new supporters.
- Events provide opportunities to widen your network and seek sponsorship.

Disadvantages:

- Events require good leadership and organizational skills.
- There are many things that can go wrong, often beyond your control. Some events are plagued by Murphy's Law, "what can go wrong will go wrong".
- As well as making money, you can actually loose money in running an unsuccessful event.
- There is the potential for bad and damaging publicity if something seriously goes wrong.

When organizing an event there are options to consider, you can:

- organize your own event
- establish a committee to organize the event for the organization
- buy places in third party events
- take part in a regular or existing event
- be the chosen organization for a major event (be the beneficiary).

Questions to consider before planning an event:

- What are the objectives (both primary and secondary) of the event?
- What is the benefit to the organization?
- Are there achievable budgets and results?
- Does the concept have the support of your Board or Head Office?

- Do you need to test by running a pilot event?
- What is the division of roles and responsibilities?
- How can the event be monitored?
- How will the evaluation be carried out?

Ideas for fundraising events

A few suggestions of ideas for community fundraising events are outlined below. These ideas do not apply to all situations. They are more suited to urban settings than rural settings. Please use the examples to develop your own ideas for your own setting.

Exhibitions and demonstration events

- Painting exhibition where local artists exhibit their work. Cost of entry goes to your organization, as does a negotiated percentage of any sales made by the artists.
- Fashion show where a local shop or fashion company provide a show of their goods. The income from the sale of tickets and a percentage of sales goes to your organization.
- Cookery demonstration by a well-known chef or a chef from a prestigious local hotel or restaurant. The income comes from entry tickets and a raffle.
- Food-tasting event. Invite a local delicatessen to display and run a tasting session so participants can taste new foods and your organization makes some money.
- Hair and beauty hints and tips evening. A local hairdresser and beautician hold an evening of advice and demonstrations about make-up and hairstyles to suit different age groups. Cost of entry and a percentage of products sold goes to your organization.
- Cake decoration session. Invite a local bakery or an individual who is known for cake decoration to give a demonstration of creative cake decoration. Hold a raffle as well as entry tickets to boost income
- Flower-arranging demonstration/class.
- Ask an expert flower-arranger or invite a local florist to run a flower-arranging class. Entry tickets and percentage of products sold will give an income. Have one flower arrangement as a raffle prize to increase the income.

Musical and dance events

Organize the event and charge for entry. Try and find a free venue to make even more money.

- A picnic and music in the grounds of a mansion.
- A themed music night e.g. classical, from a specific decade, folk etc. Have drinks and snacks on sale to boost ticket sale income.
- Traditional dance and food evening.
- Concert by a local choir.
- Dancing display. Approach a local dance school and you will ensure an audience of parents and relatives.

Sales

- An auction evening. Collect and sell unwanted donated items to the highest bidder.
- Hold a car-boot sale. This can be done by individual volunteers donating the income or as a larger event by renting out space to stall-holders.
- A book sale day. Ask for donations of good quality books and then sell them. Any unsold books can be sold on to a secondhand bookshop so maximizing income.
- Produce sale. Approach your volunteers or beneficiaries and request donations of their produce, which your organization can then sell at the most suitable venue. For example, food produce at the local market, handicrafts at a trade fair or from a stall at a shopping centre.

Competition fundraising events

- A quiz night. Invite teams of four to six people to enter and compete against each other in a hall, pub or hotel. Income comes from entry fees and a raffle.

- Raft race. Teams are invited to build their own raft and race other teams on a river. For more fun have a theme for the race such as pirates, mermaids etc. Income is derived from entry fees and the sale of food and drink.
- Organize a local talent show of song, dance, acting and/or poetry readings. This can be for different age groups and categories.
- Have an entry fee and sell food and drink to supplement income. Prizes should be donated by local businesses.
- Chess/Mah-jong/dominoes/whist/bridge games night. Teams are invited to participate in the fun evening; run as a knockout competition with an eventual winning team.
- Football or cricket team knockout competition. Extra income can come from the sale of food and drink as well as novelty items.

When planning to run an event, be innovative.

Have a brainstorming session to collect a wide range of ideas. Be aware of the competition and research your ideas and market. Evaluate your competition – what other organizations have run similar events? Did they work? Have they now become “old fashioned”? Is there still financial gain in running that particular event?

Try and keep your ideas simple and define your target group - age, gender, geography, wealth, social trends, aspirations, and general interests.

Whatever the event, there are four principal elements:

- your organization
- publicity
- performers
- sponsors.

These four elements are interdependent; if you change one, it affects all of the others. Each of these elements has something to give and something to gain. If you can get all four working in harmony then you will have a successful event.

Publicity

The media are in the business of covering news and reporting on local and current events. They may have an interest in covering your event. The amount of press, TV and radio exposure you receive will depend on how genuinely newsworthy the event is and how creative you are in generating media interest. If you cannot secure sufficient “free” media coverage then you will have to pay for publicity, usually in the form of press and poster advertising. To ensure an audience or participants, you may have to invest in at least some paid advertising. Clearly the performers and sponsors will have their own reasons to wish to see good media exposure before, during and after the event.

Performers

The performers are those people upon whose skills and appeal the event is centred: the band that is booked for the rock concert; the auctioneer and auction house undertaking the sale; the teams who will play in the charity sports event, etc. They have much to gain by participating in your event – it may be a professional fee, media coverage, goodwill, enjoyment and team-building opportunities.

Sponsors

Corporate sponsors may be willing to support your event, especially if they believe that they can get good publicity, generate goodwill, associate with your worthy cause, access VIPs and royalty, and be seen to back a winning event.

Sponsors can be asked to underwrite part or all of the costs of running the event. The nature of the event will also have an effect on the decision of the sponsor.

Marketing Mix – the 5 Ps

When planning an event you must think of the

- people audience/participants/entertainment
- product type of event
- price tickets/entry/sponsor
- place where
- period date

Twelve steps of event organizing

(a checklist and budget planning sheet is provided below for you to use)

1. Type of event

Decide what the event is going to be, having done your research into your competitors and what will make the organization money.

Decide who will organize the event and be responsible for its successful outcome.

2. Venue

Decide on the best venue. How much will it cost or will it be free? The location is vital: is it easy to reach, does it have sufficient car parking, is it easy to access by public transport, does it have toilets? Is the venue prestigious and attractive to celebrities, e.g. the President's official residence? If it is an open-air event: is the surface suitable; will there be a need for marshals, what are the safety issues to consider?

3. Day/date/time

Picking the date and time of an event can make or break it. When will most people be able to attend? Are weekends best or is morning/afternoon/evening the most suitable? What other events are scheduled around the date that you are thinking about? Is there a weather factor to take into account? An outdoor event could be ruined by rain – pick your season carefully.

4. Permission and assistance

Do you need permission to use the venue (from the owner, landowner, local authority or governing body e.g. Football Association or local sports club)? Do you need permission from the police or their assistance with street parades?

5. Budgets

Budgets should cover everything, all income and expenditure. Income includes:

- entry fees
- donations
- company sponsorship
- participants' sponsorship
- sales of T-shirts
- food, drink, programme sales
- adverts
- raffle
- lottery.

Expenditure includes:

- venue hire
- posters
- entry forms
- printing
- prizes and trophies
- cost of T-shirts
- incentives for fundraising
- advertising
- staff costs
- helpers' costs (travel, food)
- hire of facilities e.g. toilet tents
- public liability insurance.

6. Design and printing

Careful thought needs to go into the design and production of materials for the event.

Is there a special logo or design that will be on all the materials?

Materials likely to be used are:

- posters
- entry forms
- sponsor forms
- programmes – think about the numbers required
- certificates for participants.

Posters should be simple – what, where, when, how to get more information.

Entry forms must have: name, address, age and sex (if appropriate)

Put names of sponsors on appropriate materials.

7. Publicity

Without good publicity an event will fail. Use all available means of publicizing the event:

- newspapers
- radio
- television
- posters in shops/clubs/companies etc.

Hand out or post entry forms and posters to:

- people at other events
- supporters of your organization
- schools
- colleges
- universities
- hospitals
- health centres.

8. Prizes/awards/incentives

What prizes will you need? How many categories and how many prizes will you need?

Incentives are for encouraging fundraising.

For example you get a free T-shirt if you raise US\$ 50, a free sweatshirt if you raise US\$ 100, and a free pair of sports shoes if you raise US\$ 200. The top fundraiser should get a special award e.g. a weekend break for two.

Get prizes and incentives sponsored by local companies. Put the companies' names on publicity materials.

9. Helpers

Draw up a plan of the event. List all the jobs that need to be done and who will do them. Recruit helpers for the event by approaching:

- youth groups
- schools
- universities
- supporters
- friends and family
- parents or families of participants
- local sports clubs.

10. Administration

Administration falls into three categories; before the event, on the day and after the event. Before the event: be clear and list who is responsible for distributing materials; allocate someone to collect entry forms; bank any money; send out information to participants.

On the day decide: who will register participants; write out certificates; sign sponsor forms.

After the event: work out results; send out letters of thanks; bank money; analyse the budget.

Monitoring and evaluation needs to be carried out throughout the whole process.

11 . Planning and 'on the day'

Before the event make a list of all the jobs that have to be done and who is to do them and by what day/time. For the day itself a really detailed list is required and everyone must be briefed so they know exactly what their duties are.

12 . After the event

Most important – send out letters of thanks to all involved.

Work out the results. Send results and details to local paper and sponsor. Bank the money. Look at

the evaluation and learn from this event. Start planning for the next

Event

(Adapted from *Stop TB Partnership Resource Mobilization Guidelines, 2007*)

Checklist for organization of events

1.	Type of event
2.	Venue
3.	Day/date/time
4.	Permission to run event
5.	Target profit No. of participants Complete budget checklist (see next page)
6.	Poster design & locations for display Design entry form/sponsor form & details of distribution
7.	Publicity/promotion of event
8.	List prizes/awards/incentives to be used
9.	Helpers
10.	Administration requirements for event
11.	Jobs to do on the day
12.	Jobs after the event

Remember to: PLAN--DO--CHECK--ACT--PLAN--DO--CHECK--ACT

Event budget

Expenditure	Estimated income
Publicity:	Entry fees:
Venue:	Sponsorship:
Prizes:	Donations:
Printing costs:	Other: (give details)
Advertising:	
Postage:	
Incentives:	
Helper expenses:	
Staff expenses:	
Miscellaneous: Insurance (give details)	

Recommended additional reading

- Passingham S. *Tried and Tested Ideas for Local Fundraising Events*.
Gray JF, Elsden S. *Organising Special Events for Fundraising & Campaigning*
Mutz J, Murray K. *Fundraising for Dummies* - Chapter 18
Flanagan J. *Successful Fundraising - A Complete Handbook for Volunteers & Professionals* - Chapter 4