



Getting Started

Organising an event, however big or small, requires thought, planning and effort in order to be a success. You might not need to cover all of the following points if you are planning a small Refugee Week event, but if your event is on a larger scale perhaps you will need to think of other things.

Decide what you are trying to achieve

You have decided you want to do something to support Refugee Week. But what are you trying to achieve by running the event? Is it to raise funds for your group or for a refugee agency, or is it to raise awareness of the issues? It may be an opportunity for local refugees and asylum-seekers to celebrate their culture and their contribution to the UK, and a unique opportunity for partnership and collaboration with the host community. You need to be clear about the objectives of the event before you start, so spend some time thinking about this before you move on.

Decide what kind of event you would like to hold

The following questions may help you formulate an idea for an event or project:

Who is your target audience? A key aim of Refugee Week is attracting new audiences – think about how your event can reach out to those who are not already familiar with the issues.

What do you think this audience will enjoy? Your event could be anything from a music or poetry evening to a basketball tournament or a debate or lecture.

Who will help you to organise it? Think about working in partnership with other organisations / individuals who can contribute to making the event successful, and may bring added elements which would otherwise be missing.

When will the event take place? You may need to check:

What other events are going on during the Week in your area? Try not to double-book if possible

What date is convenient for you and the other organisers of the event?

When are the performers available?

When is the venue available?

Cover yourself!

Before you begin to publicise the event, check that your venue - be it a park, hall or anywhere else - knows exactly what you plan to do, and agrees to it. For a large event, particularly if it is going to be outside, you may need insurance or permission from the local authority. Also, you could notify the police and if necessary, leaflet local residents telling them what's going to happen. You will need all the support you can get and this will also help with publicity.

Plan your budget

Having a well planned budget will be an asset when organising your event. Projects can end up costing more than anticipated, resulting in difficulties; however this can be avoided if you plan your budget and costs in advance. Having a thought-out and realistic budget will show funders and investors you are serious; indeed some funders will require a copy of your budget breakdown as they'll want to be sure you have thought about everything before they commit money to your event. A good way to create a budget is to get together everyone involved and brainstorm all the things that you will need to pay for (such as venue charges, catering costs, publicity leaflets etc.) Try to base your budget on real quotes rather than estimates wherever possible. Even with the very best planning some unexpected costs can occur so make sure you include a small contingency amount in your plan to help cover these.

If you are organising a fundraising event, you don't just want to make money to cover your expenses; you want to make a profit! Make a list of all your likely expenses. You may be surprised at how many hidden costs there are when you sit

down and think through your event step by step. Then make a second list, of all the ways you are hoping to bring in money. Now deduct the expenditure from the expected income - are you happy with the result? If not, then think about how you may be able to reduce costs. Are there things that you can borrow or have donated? Will a local company sponsor the event in return for a mention in the publicity? Or can you approach other funders to give you support?

Are there ways to increase your income? For example, by holding a raffle at your event with donated prizes, or a skills auction where friends and supporters offer their services, from carpentry to baby-sitting, for sale to the highest bidder (which costs you nothing but goodwill!)

Use your contacts

Identify other groups in your area that might be interested in your event; either in helping to organise it, using their contacts to get support or just by attending. For example, community groups, faith groups, refugee groups, youth clubs etc.

Don't forget to think creatively: Do any celebrities live in your area, or come from it? Invite them to make a guest appearance at your Refugee Week event and, if they agree, use this in all your publicity. If they can't make the event, could they give you a quote about the event to use in your publicity? Personalities from local TV and radio may also be willing to help.

Plan for the worst, just in case!

Compile a check-list of everything you need to do to ensure your event runs smoothly, and make sure that you check and check again that all possible precautions have been made and you have a plan to fall back on if anything major goes wrong. If your event is going to be outdoors, think about what you will do or where you could go if it rains.

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