

General Event and Program Planning

Commitment

Commitment of the group to the project is essential because planning and implementing is time-consuming. In order to have a successful event, there is much coordination needed. The beginning stages are where you will need to create subgroups, which is discussed further in the planning structure section.

Lead Time

For most events, planning should begin about 3-4 months before the projected date. If the group wants to seek co-sponsors or grant funds for the series, then allow about 6-7 months so that there is plenty of time to contact companies, do outreach and meetings, and write partnership.

Sponsorship

The most appropriate sponsoring group must be defined by the group depending on the target audience, the theme of the event, and the film shown. You can contact national organizations and ask how to get in touch with local chapters or affiliate organizations. The best institutional partners would have access to appropriate facilities and would possess some expertise in promotion or publicity. Examples are: Universities or four year colleges, community colleges, high schools, civic centers, public libraries, and councils on world affairs. It is worthwhile to contact a local newspaper (or even radio or television stations) regarding co-sponsorship.

Planning Structure

As part of event planning, you should always consider subcommittees. Examples of subcommittees are: speakers, financials/fundraising, facilities, exhibits/displays, publicity/promotion, and food/refreshments. Communication is key between the subgroups and the large group. Each subcommittee should have a head contact person who will be the main liaison between groups.

Programming

Audience: Will the project be orientated toward the community on a large scale or in a more specific institution level? Determine your target audience.

Admission: Will the event be free or will there be an admission fee? You must keep in mind your target audience, but also your rental, facility and food fees.

Speakers/Announcers: Will you have speakers who have knowledge or expertise on the subject?

Timing: Making sure your event is calendared properly and that the event itself is timely. Make sure the duration of the program is timely in the sense that it does not drag on and the audience is fully engaged the whole time.

Costs

The cost of an event is a fundamental aspect to look at. Cost decides whether you will need fundraising, sponsors, etc. Some costs to think about include:

- 1) personnel costs
- 2) travel
- 3) office supplies
- 4) printing/duplicating
- 5) graphics
- 6) postage
- 7) rental
- 8) advertising

Funding

With fundraising, the best tool is to talk to people and ask them to donate time, expertise and or services. Even after these donations, you may still need a grant source to underwrite the project. You can ask for support from individual or corporate donors, foundations, or governmental agencies with appropriate grants available.

Publicity

You must promote the event extensively. Flyers, brochures, and online social networks are the easiest way to publicize. The flyer can describe your program and give the appropriate information according to time, date and location. It is best to make it graphically appealing! A brochure is more of a challenge because it requires more graphics and professional experience. Most colleges and universities have a graphics department with students willing to help. Make brochures self-mailer so you avoid the envelope cost.

News Releases

An event announcement should be sent to major media outlets in your area. These outlets could be newspapers, monthly magazines, a public calendar of events, city websites, and radio and television stations.

How to sell your event:

National Peace Corps Association 2 of 3
Peace Corps 50th Anniversary Planning Guides

as of 8/25/09

<http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/content/50th-anniversary-campaign>

Make it brief. Give them the 5 W's: who, what, when, where and why. Make sure to include your contact info as well as their information at the top of the letter. Make sure the release is going to a person with a title. Make sure to allow enough time.

Advertisements

Newspapers: Ad space can be expensive. You could try to ask them to be a co-sponsor in exchange for free ad space but this will only work in larger cities. Some places will give discounts for non-profits to have ads.

Electronic media: Radio and television stations will frequently do free public service announcements.

Facebook: Create an event or group on Facebook and invite all your friends!

Twitter: Twitter the details on your event and people will follow!

Peace Corps Connect: On your profile page, you could post a discussion about the event! Also use your group's forum and any other group forum of which you are a member.