

The real role of co-ordinators – workshop summary

Definition

Co-ordinator: ‘to integrate and adjust a number of different parts or processes so as to relate smoothly to one another; to combine harmoniously.’

Co-ordination: ‘harmonious combination; balanced or skilful movement’

The following skills and knowledge can be important for effective co-ordination:

- Leadership: enable group to focus and sustain morale
- Knowledge of membership (strength and weaknesses)
- Facilitate, integrate and delegate, not dominate
- General awareness of environmental issues
- Knowledge of group dynamics
- Be able to say NO

The following specific tasks might be included:

- Gather and disseminate information
- Be the main point of contact for public and media
- Facilitate networking with non-FOE groups
- Look at ‘best practice’ in other groups
- Train / coach future co-ordinators
- Monitor representation
- Deal with difficult members
- Ensure that activities / progress are monitored and evaluated
- Identify and promote successes (internal and external)
- Encourage the development of skills

Co-ordinators should not have to:

- Pick up or take on vacant roles
- Write or distribute newsletters
- Always work on stalls
- Fundraise
- Talk to schools / clubs etc
- Chair all meetings

Common problems

- Information overload - using it / disseminating it (shorter versions of briefings would help this)
- Picking up the ball after someone else has dropped it
- Tension between co-ordination and campaigning
- Internal communication
- People management (particularly difficult / ineffective members)
- Time management
- Technophobia (amongst group members) hinders effective working

Watch this space

- During the next year, the Capacity Building team will be looking at how it can better support Co-ordinators in the future.