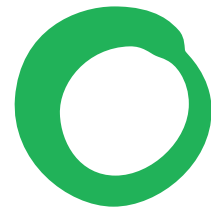


# How to: ENGAGE WITH DIFFERENT AUDIENCES



**Friends of  
the Earth**

A frequent criticism of green campaign groups is that they only talk to people who are already interested in environmental issues. This pull-out examines the many ways your local group can reach out to different audiences, and the benefits that this can bring.

## WHY BOTHER?

As everyone knows, it is easy to have a conversation with someone if you already feel that they are on the same wavelength as you. This is fine as far as it goes but for many groups, it is easier to get results when campaigning at both local and national levels if you can show that your campaign is supported by a wide cross-section of your community.

The Big Ask campaign demonstrated the necessity and effectiveness of engaging a wide variety of people. And now in the Renewables campaign, groups have been generating cross-community support for UK renewable energy targets.

Another good reason to reach out is to help you recruit and retain new members.

Here are just a few of the rewards your group can benefit from by putting on different types of events, and setting out to attract a different audience:

- raise your groups' profile in the local area
- reach out to individuals and communities that might not otherwise be aware of Friends of the Earth
- make new and lasting contacts
- build support for your campaigns
- attract new members, fundraise, increase your lobbying power

## WHO TO TARGET?

Before you decide what kind of event or action you want to do, it is necessary to spend some time as a group thinking about the sort of people you want to engage with. Who you want to appeal to will depend

on what you are trying to achieve. For example if you want to encourage more young people to get involved with your group, you might consider putting on an event in a student area.

Brainstorm ideas using the following questions as prompts:

- What are you trying to achieve? (eg. More young people becoming involved with the group).
- Who do you need to target in order to achieve this? (eg. students, teachers etc).
- What methods could you use to attract these people? (eg. Putting on events that appeal to younger people such as gigs or films, using new media such as Facebook)
- When is the best time to try and engage with these people? (Check out what's already happening in your area. For example Freshers fairs, meals, arts and film festivals will appeal to different audiences).
- How can you maximise your impact? Could you do a press release about your event? What sort of publicity will you need to generate to ensure a good turn-out? How can you follow up your event afterwards?

## LEARNING FROM OTHERS

It can be quite daunting putting on a new kind of event for the first time. Here are four examples of different target audiences and ways that different parts of the Friends of the Earth network engaged with these audiences.

### KEY-DECISION MAKERS, MUSIC FANS

**Joanna Watson, Promotions and Events Manager, discusses the success of the Big Ask Live as it attracting new audiences to the campaign**

#### How did the idea for the Big Ask Live music gigs come about?

We wanted to raise profile, reach more people and new media, build activism on The Big Ask, reflect our brand, raise lots of money, do something a bit unexpected and tailor an event to our priority audiences (key decision-makers; major donors; mid-greens; Thom Yorke fans; supporters).

#### How did Thom Yorke end up getting involved?

We had a developing relationship with Thom Yorke and wanted to use his pulling power and commitment to the climate cause to raise profile around the Big Ask. We chose other musicians (Kate Rusby; Gryff Rees) to reflect a good fit with Friends of the Earth. We didn't go for a thrash metal gig for example, nor a middle of the road Barry Manilow!

#### What kind of people came along to The Big Ask Live?

Doing a benefit music gig gave us good reach into a younger and more trendy demographic and enabled us to adjust people's perceptions of us as being a bit worthy and unfashionable. We created a buzz round the ticket sales – it was a sell-out from the start; lots of fans got to see the gig and we kept some tickets back as an incentive for our own supporters. The aim was to raise money from tickets sales to cover our costs and build contacts with existing and new donors to contribute to the campaign. The gig was a good opportunity to engage with powerful political players – in the event both David Cameron and David Milliband attended and gave us some possibilities for political leverage. We also approached everyone at the gig to ask them to sign a Big Ask postcard to help build activism.

#### Did you succeed in getting coverage of the gig in different kinds of media?

Yes – this worked really well. The gig provided opportunities to get into different media (eg the society pages of the London Standard; music papers; music web sites; Thom Yorke's fan site) and also several bites at the cherry – when we launched the gig and opened for ticket sales; on the night – who was filmed attending; thought and comment pieces around Thom in different print



Hugh Macdonald

**Big Gig:** Kate Rusby at the Big Ask Live concert in 2005

media. We got lots of coverage and this really helped to raise our profile.

#### Do you think putting on this kind of event has changed how people perceive Friends of the Earth?

Yes. Putting on a successful gig and communicating a message about climate change helped promote Friends of the Earth as a professional organisation which is good to do business with and we maintained our reputation with the venue, the artists, their agents and promoters, the media, the politicians, supporters, donors and Thom Yorke fans.

#### Any advice to pass on to local activists planning to do this sort of event themselves?

Definitely – the key lessons we learnt were:

- Be clear about your objectives and priorities.
- Be clear about the audience you are trying to attract
- Be realistic about budgets to do this properly.
- Do a robust media plan and think about how many opportunities you have to promote your message.
- Choose your artists to fit your target audience and not vice versa.
- Set targets: how many people? How much money do you want to raise? Where do you want to be seen?
- Plan properly and make sure the event reflects Friends of the Earth's brand and values

# 2

## CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND STUDENTS

Many local groups have developed games, talks and events for younger people of all ages. Member of the Youth & Education network, Dina Baird of Warrington Friends of the Earth, shares her experiences



South Tees Friends of the Earth

**We're game:** South Tees have also successfully engaged kids

**Over the last 2 years I have talked to a range of ages about the environment – they all require very different approaches.**

### Nursery

I did a recycling workshop with 3-5 year olds, which needed to be interactive and fun. I included acting, music and visual aids and broke the workshop into bite-size chunks to keep the children's attention. We included a role play/dressing up session involving a landfill supervisor and police man, a discussion of the problems and solutions to waste – using clear examples the children could relate to; some music while the children

helped sort out a bag of rubbish I brought in into the recycling bags (all thoroughly cleaned and made safe!); and finally, story time!

### Primary level

Slightly older children asked me to talk to them about deforestation. I focused mainly on biodiversity issues and used photos of cute animals which always helps! As part of the problem we discussed palm oil, so I brought in crisps and chocolate and we looked at the ingredients labels. Other ways of making issues real to children at this age is to look at potential deadline dates - like telling them that the orang utan could be extinct in 20 years – and asking the children to tell you how old they will be then. They also old enough to want to help so I got them to write a letter to their MP.

### Secondary

I talked about pollution to a group of 14 year olds. Brainstorming is good with this age group as they are more confident. As with any group of people, it's useful to find things they relate to. I took in deodorant, cosmetics and toiletries – we looked carefully at the labels and discussed the impact of all the chemicals on human, animal and environmental health.

**Friends of the Earth has a Youth and Education network which offers support, information and resources for members. You can find out more about these at: [http://www.foe.co.uk/community/local\\_groups/resource/young\\_people.html](http://www.foe.co.uk/community/local_groups/resource/young_people.html)**

# 3

## STUDENTS

**A new network has been set up by members of several local groups to try and attract more young members and students to get involved in our campaigns and local groups.**

Young Friends of the Earth has been organising creative actions and making links with young activists to promote local groups and Friends of the Earth campaigns. They held stalls at the Europe's largest student activist conference and have already made strong links with university-leavers involved in People & Planet, the student campaigning group. In December, a number of members travelled to Poznan in Poland to take part in the UK Youth Delegation to the UN Climate Talks and do some global networking. By using Facebook and YouTube to share news, videos and to

organise actions and meet-ups, they were able to target and reach a wide audience and get their message out quickly and effectively



Friends of the Earth Europe

**Poznan Penguins:** Young activists demanded tough action from world leaders

**You can find out more by visiting Facebook at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and typing in 'Young Friends of the Earth'.**

# 4

## CHRISTMAS SHOPPERS

Why not use seasonal opportunities to reach new audiences? Grab people's attention by tying in with existing events or popular themes, and reach audiences you might not usually get to talk to.

Lots of groups tried out different ideas last Christmas including:

- A Green Christmas Pledge Tree: Manchester members collected green pledges on recycled wrapping paper and made it into decorative paper chains.
- Ethical Tombola: By getting donations from shops featured in the ethical shopping guide to Manchester, the group promoted their ethical guide to a new audience, drummed up some business for the shops, and raised money for the group by selling tickets.
- Annual Santa Parade: Birmingham members held their 7th Annual Buy Nothing Day parade – marching through town dressed as Santas with thought-provoking placards like 'Don't think, just spend' or 'Money can buy you love' and handing out leaflets.
- Low-energy baubles: Penistone decorated a tree with low-energy lightbulbs at a Community Christmas tree fair!



Ho ho ho: engaging Christmas shoppers

## RESOURCES

### Local Groups Handbook

Every group should have a copy. It contains case studies, practical advice and resources to help you with every aspect of running a group. For help with planning engaging actions, boosting your profile and communicating with the public see:

- Chapter 3: Action
- Chapter 4: Profile

[http://www.foe.co.uk/community/local\\_groups/resource/handbook.html](http://www.foe.co.uk/community/local_groups/resource/handbook.html)

### Publicity materials

Contact our Publications Despatch team on 0207 4901555 or via [pubs\\_despatch@foe.co.uk](mailto:pubs_despatch@foe.co.uk)

### Other How tos

Previous pull-outs are available to download at : [http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/how\\_tos/](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/how_tos/)

- How to get your message across
- How to effectively engage new people
- How to run a kick-ass stall
- How to raise your local profile
- How to celebrate and share your successes