



GENOCIDE INTERVENTION

— NETWORK —

www.GenocideIntervention.net

Event Planning Guide

This guide contains tips and suggestions for planning your event. Use it as a reference to create a successful, informative and engaging occasion!

1. Basic tips for your event

Decide on your goals

There are five broad objectives that you can accomplish when holding events.

- ✓ Attract new members
- ✓ Raise funds
- ✓ Make news
- ✓ Influence public officials
- ✓ Educate others

Most events will achieve more than one of these things: a creative fundraising event can get media coverage, which should then put pressure on public officials. Every event you hold will educate others in some way.

Which of the five objectives do you most want to achieve? Plan your event accordingly. For example, a teach-in or a speaker is probably the best way to educate others, whereas coupling this with a benefit concert or dinner is a great fundraising tactic.

How can you integrate the other objectives into your event? Even in small ways, you can design an event so that it accomplishes many objectives. Ways to do this include sending out press releases, having an email sign-up sheet at every event, and providing basic informational handouts about genocide, GI-NET, and opportunities for involvement.

Start early! Remember that:

- ✓ The best locations are often booked months in advance.
- ✓ If you're working with others, you want to give them plenty of time to organize and support your efforts. Some might require at least a month's notice to be able to help.
- ✓ Give yourself time to fix whatever might go wrong.

Tips for planning ahead

- ✓ Check the date: be sure to choose a date that doesn't conflict with another big event in the area, holiday, similar event held by a partnering organization, etc.
- ✓ In reserving space, allot time for setup and cleanup if needed.
- ✓ Organize a core group of volunteers to help out before and during the event.
- ✓ If planning a large speaking event, know whether or not you need to research insurance options that may keep your group out of trouble. This is especially important if you are traveling as a group, if the event is linked to an action that compromises someone's health (i.e. a fast), or if any activities during the event may present possible danger to the participants (i.e. overnight campout, civil disobedience).
- ✓ Make sure you are covering all your bases. Know your sponsoring organization or institution's protocols for public events and stick to them.



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2. Specific event ideas

A lot of people think that a speaking event, for example, is simply one concerned individual lecturing to a group of concerned individuals – wrong! The beauty of planning events is that you can make it whatever you want. Unconventional events are often most successful. Here are some typical event ideas you can combine and refine with your own unique and creative touch.

- ✓ **Teach-in.** Show a short film or PowerPoint presentation on genocide. Have your speaker or educated members explain different elements of the conflict. Leave time for a Q&A. Teach-ins are ideally held in a setting small enough to encourage discussion.
- ✓ **Vigil.** These are easy to organize. Hold a candlelight vigil at dusk or at midnight. Keep the mood somber. Alternate testimonies from areas undergoing genocide with poems or nondenominational prayers expressing a wish for peace.
- ✓ **Demonstration.** March with signs in a populated area of your city or town. Go to the capitol building of your state and hold a rally on the steps. Hold a die-in.
- ✓ **Civil disobedience.** GI-NET does not encourage this option unless it's very well planned. Speak with a GI-NET staff member before organizing acts of civil disobedience.
- ✓ **Benefit show.** Plan your own show: Battle of the Bands, variety shows, a capella shows, spoken word, dance show. You can also approach the organizers of any entertainment event to ask if they would donate the proceeds of one night to your anti-genocide efforts.
- ✓ **Art exhibit.** Display an exhibit of images from areas of conflict in a prominent spot of your venue. Have a table set up at the exhibit at all times. Try to get restaurant or coffee shop owners to display photos from the exhibit.
- ✓ **Auction.** Collect donated items to sell in an auction. Auctions might require advanced planning since you will need to work with many people to collect the auctioned items.
- ✓ **Restaurant night.** Designate a night where local restaurants, clubs, or bars donate a portion of their proceeds to your group's efforts. Consider a smaller version of Dining for Darfur: <http://diningfordarfur.org>.
- ✓ **Prayer sessions.** Work with faith groups on campus and houses of faith in your area to organize an interfaith event. Good organizing materials are available here: <http://www.savedarfur.org/faith>.
- ✓ **Art session.** Make an item that can be displayed in town, presented to your speaker, Representative or Senator, or used for other events.
- ✓ **Fast.** Hold a fast for a day or more and have participants donate what they would have otherwise spent on food or a luxury item to your efforts. Make it as public as possible.

- ✓ **All day rallies.** Have a table or exhibit somewhere that people will see constantly. Get other organizations involved through friendly competitions with fun games like tug-of-war or pie-eating contests – something that will make people wish they were involved.
- ✓ **Camp-outs.** Set up a sponsor-a-camper system, where each camper collects donations in the name of a refugee.
- ✓ **Documentary or film showings.** A good list is available at <http://www.genocideintervention.net/resources>
- ✓ **Any combination of the above!**



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3. Work with others

Often, the key to successful organizing is building alliances with existing groups. Fortunately, this movement appeals to a wide and diverse array of organizations. Most likely, groups in your area would love to be involved with your efforts, so be confident about contacting them. Often groups are excited to support your efforts, but you need to be as specific as possible about how they can help. Three main opportunities for partner involvement include **Planning, Publicity, and Participation**.

1. **Planning:** Provide a venue for the event, provide funds for your program, and connect with other supportive individuals or groups.

2. **Publicity:** Issue press releases, include a notice in their newsletter, have their members help post fliers, send info out over their listserv, mention the event in meetings, and if you are holding this event at or near a university, ask professors to provide extra credit to event attendees.

3. **Participation:** With some groups, your ask might be simple – just attend!

Groups to approach:

- ✓ Faith-based groups
- ✓ Red Cross or humanitarian groups
- ✓ Sports teams
- ✓ Social Action or Human Rights groups
- ✓ Service Groups
- ✓ International Centers or Organizations
- ✓ University groups

Consider planning your event in collaboration with local colleges, universities, high schools and middle schools. Contact students you know at these schools to invite them to help plan or just participate in your event. There may be several schools nearby who already have established STAND (student division of GI-NET) chapters.

You can also find groups in your community – often faith-based or service organizations – that would be willing to participate in this event.

Latch on to other events

Plan your speaking event in conjunction with events organized by others. For example, if you know that an African cultural night is happening, ask the organizers if they can include your speaker into their program, and if you can set up an info table, or possibly even help plan a part of the event. Propose it in a way that shows you both want to get some support for your group as well as contribute to their efforts.

Some possible events: African cultural nights, international group expos/fairs, service groups expos/fairs, theme weeks for organizations (i.e. human rights week).

Follow-up

Keep a record of those that supported your event. When appropriate, (especially if businesses or individuals donated items or funds to your event), send a thank-you note to them afterwards. This can be extremely important for planning other events in the future.



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4. Publicize

It's possible that good publicity is as important as the event itself. The only way people will come to an event is if they hear about it, so there's no such thing as too much publicity. **The earlier you start the better.** It might be helpful to have one person on a committee take charge of all publicity matters. Especially well-suited for this are creative or artistic people, and those with a lot of connections. Publicity ideas are nearly endless. A good rule of thumb is the more unique, the better. Here are some traditional ways to get the word out:

1. **Fliers.** Go all out: bulletin boards, bathrooms, record stores, bars, bus stops, libraries, universities. If you have the funds, make color or glossy fliers. If you have fewer funds, print quarter-sheets instead of full pages. Stick to the essentials: give all necessary information in 30 words or less!
2. **Listservs.** Send a concise email message over as many listservs as possible. Check to see how groups can publicize over an informational listserv.
3. **Tabling.** Set up a table in a high-traffic spot in your town or neighborhood. Sell tickets and provide passerby with details about your event.
4. **Make announcements at work or in class.** Ask your professor or employer if you can make an announcement. This is especially useful in large lecture classes.
5. **Social Networks.** Set up a blog or event invitation on your social networking page (Facebook, MySpace, etc.). Invite everyone.
6. **Letters to the editor.** Send letters to local papers. Ask someone to write an editorial about the importance of being active in world proceedings and how coming to your event is a good start.
7. **Announcements in publications.** Buy an ad in the paper. If someone in your group works for the paper, see if they can get you a deal. Buy the largest ad you can. Bigger is better: more people will see it.
8. **Evite.** It's free and eye-catching. Use evite.com to send an event invitation to friends.
9. **Go to club meetings.** Write the group leader and ask to make a brief announcement at the beginning of their meeting.
10. **T-shirts.** Have everyone in your group wear GI-NET or event t-shirts on the day of or in the week leading up to the event.
11. **Public Service Announcements.** Release a PSA on your local radio station announcing your event.

Always inform local media outlets about any event!



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5. Resources

Table resources

Whether you're tabling for publicity or tabling at your own events, stock your table with as many supplies as you can.

- General info items
 - ✓ Areas of Conflict background and updates
 - ✓ Event fliers (eye-catching, one-page summary of your event)
 - ✓ Information on GI-NET
- Local organizing items
 - ✓ Email sign-up sheet
 - ✓ List of ongoing projects and upcoming events (include contact information)
 - ✓ Advocacy materials (i.e. letters, petitions)
 - ✓ Donations information
- Attention-getting items
 - ✓ Banner, posters or display boards
 - ✓ Images from areas of conflict
 - ✓ Film or slideshow on a laptop
 - ✓ T-shirts
 - ✓ Stickers, buttons or wristbands

Art exhibits

The following individuals and groups have created exhibits from their photographs that have been shown on campuses and at events around the country.

- Photographer Ryan Spencer Reed
- Former Marine Brian Steidle and US Holocaust Memorial Museum
- Hillel and Human Rights Watch "Smallest Witness" Exhibit
- Photographer Mark Brecke

For more details on each of these and links to other multimedia, see <http://www.genocideintervention.net/educate/multimedia>.

Events calendar

Find events in your area and post your events on GI-NET's online events calendar. To find events, also check the calendars of the Save Darfur Coalition (<http://www.savedarfur.org/events/map>).



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Event Planning Checklist

- Identify intended audience, venue, date, time (8 weeks in advance)**
- Pull together a planning and outreach group and delegate responsibilities**
- Confirm guest speakers, facilitators, or featured participants (if applicable)**
- Ensure permission is obtained for all related aspects of event – venue, use of equipment sponsoring organizations or institutions, etc.**
- Reach out and publicize to members of allied groups, community members and potential GI-NET members**
- Have informational handouts, GI-NET materials available in case people ask for more information (available on the [Resources](#) page)**
- Confirm equipment needed for event (audio/visual equipment, food/beverages, etc.)**