



Event Planning Guide

www.savedarfur.org

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Event Planning Step 1:

Pre-Planning

Goals and Mission:

When planning an event it is important to define your goal. Why do you want to hold an event? What is the purpose of your event? Establishing a specific goal in the beginning stages of your planning will ensure a more focused and successful event. Also, discuss who you want to target with your event.

Choosing your target audience can help narrow your mission and goal. Most Darfur-related events have one or more of these goals:

- **Darfur Education:** Educate those in your community about the genocide in Darfur and the history of the region.
- **Fundraising:** Raise money for Darfur advocacy and relief efforts.
- **Advocacy:** Push decision-makers (the President, UN Secretary General, members of Congress, local elected officials, etc) to take strong action to stop the genocide.

- **Media Coverage:** Get the media to cover the situation in Darfur.

Event Committee:

Running an event alone can be very difficult, so it's important to recruit others to help. Ask family members, neighbors, community members, students at a local school, etc... Designate a chair person for the event who can be in charge of making executive decisions through the planning process.

TIP: As you plan and execute your event, look back at your goals to make sure that your event will meet those goals. If your goals need to be adjusted, discuss adjustments with your event committee.

TIP: Recruit as many people as possible to your event committee, but make sure that there is a core group of people responsible for the main planning components of the event.

Event Planning Step 2:

Choosing Your Event

After defining your goal and mission, choose what type of event would help you accomplish your goal.

Any event is about bringing people together. Remember that different events are different sizes, but when it comes to grassroots action, the more people the better. Below is a list of possible events that you could plan to help you achieve your goal.

Rallies, Marches and Vigils

Many groups around the country hold rallies, marches and vigils to bring their communities together and make a strong statement demanding action to stop the genocide in Darfur. These events can be a very meaningful solidarity-building activity for your group, and they are also a great way to get the attention of decision-makers and media in your area.

Rallies, marches and vigils:

- Are great ways to unite your community around ending the genocide
- Work best for larger crowds
- Almost always require permits—work with your local government to apply for permits and discuss any law enforcement presence.

Also, when planning the events, make sure to:

- Recruit volunteers to help with information tables, setup and take-down and crowd control at the event.
- Design the program well in advance, and make sure that event leaders, volunteers and any speakers know the program schedule.

Educational Events

Hold a teach-in, speaker event or multimedia presentation (including film showings) to educate those in your community about the genocide in Darfur. These events are powerful ways to educate members of your community about the genocide on a deep and substantive level.

Lobbying Events

Conduct a lobby day. There are a few great ways to set up meetings with your representatives and ask them to take action to stop the genocide in Darfur:

- Schedule a meeting with your representative at their office, or
- Ask your representatives to attend a public community forum on Darfur. Ask them to speak about the efforts they are making to stop the genocide, and then open the floor to questions.

TIP: Make sure to check out the Additional Resources section (page 8 in this guide) for various resources like speaker and multimedia and videos that you can use to plan your educational event or rally.

TIP: Use the Event Planning Timeline (page 7 in this guide) to help direct your event planning.

Event Planning Step 3:

Promoting and Recruiting for Your Event

It's time to get the word out! Here are some ways to publicize your event:

Post Your Event Online:

Post your event on the Save Darfur Coalition website at <http://www.savedarfur.org/page/event/create>. Once your event is posted, visitors to the website will be able to view it when they search for events in the area. If your event is part of the Global Days for Darfur, choose the event type "Global Days for Darfur".

Email Invitations

Write emails to friends and neighbors telling them about your event and directing them to your event's page on the Save Darfur website.

- Once you post your event on the Save Darfur website, the tools provided to send email invitations out.
- Ask people to RSVP for your event online at your event's page on the Save Darfur website (sometimes it is easier to set up a new email address. Example: iowadarfurrally@yahoo.com).
- Listserves: Send event announcements out to listserves in your area.

Outreach in Your Community

Ask your school, house of worship, and any other organization you are a part of to help you publicize your event. Here's how they can help:

- **Bulletin and Newsletter Announcements:** Ask the groups you are a member of to place an event announcement in all of their bulletins and newsletters, both online and in print. The announcement should ask people to visit your event's webpage and contact you with any questions. You can also ask to include an event flyer in any mailings the organization sends out.
- **Verbal Announcements:** Come to your group's meetings and events and ask to make an announcement about your Darfur event. Also, ask the leader of the group (or the clergy at your house of worship) to announce your event to the entire organization.
- **Post Flyers:** Put flyers up at your group's office or building. You can also ask to set up a Darfur table with information about the genocide and about your events.

Outreach to Other Groups

The key to a successful large event is getting others involved. Here's what to ask for from other organizations and groups in town:

- **Event Announcements and Postings:** Ask other groups to announce your event in their print and online newsletters and verbally at their gatherings. Also, post flyers in their buildings and offices.
- **Appoint an Organizational Representative:** Ask them to designate one person from their organization/campus to serve as their point-of-contact for the event. Then invite that representative to be a part of the event committee and involve them in the planning process.

Local Publicity and Advertising

- Post event flyers and signs around your neighborhood, community or school.
- Advertise in your local newspaper and on local radio stations to help spread the word!

TIP: If you're planning a big event, use ALL of these methods to get the word out. That way you'll reach more people. The more people hear about your event, the more likely they are to attend.

TIP: Planning a community-wide event? Then involve the whole community. Reach out to other groups in the community and ask them to be part of your event committee. Their members are much more likely to show up if their group participates in the planning process.

Event Planning Timeline

Week 1: Event Pre-Planning

- Reach out to groups in the area and ask for a group representative to participate in the event-planning process
- Form your event committee and designate an event chair/point-person or steering committee
- Establish goals for your event, and discuss options for types of events. Consider the pros and cons for each option.
- Conduct research into those options and gauge interest: Is the location available?
- Develop a list of potential speakers
- Decide on the event and contact possible local speakers.

Week 2: Delegating Responsibility

Assign various event-planning roles to members of your event committee, including:

- Reserve the location (apply for any permits needed by calling the city or county).
- Draft an event budget. Include spending for logistics, publicity (flyers, ads), and program expenses (like speakers, films, candles for vigils, etc).
- Event Program Planning:
 - Rallies/Speaking Events: Contact speakers.
 - Educational events: Organize educational materials/multimedia.
 - Lobbying: Schedule lobby visits.
- Event Logistics Planning:
 - Brainstorm all logistical needs and establish timeline for getting them done, including location setup, staging (if any) and audio/visual (sound system, etc).
- Publicity:
 - Post event on Save Darfur website at <http://www.savedarfur.org/page/event/create>.
 - Draft publicity materials, including flyers, handbills and event announcements for print and online newsletters and bulletins.

Weeks 3&4: Program and Outreach

- Outreach and Publicity:
 - Distribute publicity materials and event announcements to local organizations and ask them to distribute the information to their members.
 - Send emails out to friends and family directing them to your event's savedarfur.org webpage.
- Program:

- Confirm speakers/films/etc. Draft and confirm a schedule for your event, as well as event staging.
- Logistics:
 - Buy/rent supplies and equipment needed and make signs for event.
 - Brainstorm volunteer needs for day of event.

Week 5: Final Preparation and Additional Publicity

Focus on confirming the program and logistics and doing additional outreach to build publicity. REMEMBER:

Most people will decide to attend your event the week before, so this is the time to get the word out!

- Logistics: Confirm preparations (and check-in with any vendors), recruit and confirm volunteers needed.
- Program: Confirm any speakers and give them guidelines (topics, speech length, program schedule).
- Publicity: Run any paid ads that were budgeted, reconnect with all local groups and ask them to announce the event again, re-send emails to friends and family. Also, post flyers locally around town.

Week 6: Run Your Event!

- RECONFIRM: Confirm all details, volunteers, program elements and other aspects of the event again.
- Publicity: Same as Week 5.
- Run Your Event!

Additional Resources

www.SaveDarfur.org

Background Info:

You can get more information for your teach-in at <http://www.savedarfur.org/pages/background> or download a PowerPoint presentation at http://www.savedarfur.org/pages/educate_others. For a teach-in or session catered to students, go to http://www.savedarfur.org/pages/organize_your_campus for ideas and materials. Visit <http://www.savedarfur.org/pages/legislation> to get information on current and pending legislation regarding Darfur.

Speaker Info:

For information about speakers available in your area, contact speakers@savedarfur.org and include your state and city, and date of your event.

Also, visit the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum's Speaker Directory for genocide prevention at http://online.ushmm.org/speakers/genocide_prevention.

Multimedia:

For info on photo exhibits, films and other multimedia, visit:
<http://www.savedarfur.org/pages/resources>.

Faith-Based Humanitarian Relief Groups

- American Jewish World Services - www.ajws.org
- Bread for the World - www.bread.org
- Catholic Relief Services - www.crs.org
- Islamic Relief - www.irw.org
- Lutheran World Relief - www.lwr.org
- Mennonite Central Committee - www.mcc.org/
- Presbyterian World Service & Development - www.presbycan.ca/pwsd/
- United Methodist Committee on Relief - <http://gbgm-umc.org/umcor/>

Information and News Sites

- Sign up for the Save Darfur Coalition weekly news update at www.SaveDarfur.org
- Africa Action - www.AfricaAction.org
- Dear Sudan - www.dearsudan.org
- Doctors Without Borders - www.doctorswithoutborders.org
- Human Rights Watch - www.hrw.org
- International Crisis Group - www.CrisisGroup.org
- Students Taking Action Now: Darfur - www.STANDarfur.org
- Sudan Divestment Task Force - www.sudandivestment.org
- Sudan Church Materials - www.sudanchurchmaterials.com

Contact Your Representatives

- Senators - www.senate.gov or 202-224-3121
- Representatives - www.house.gov or 202-224-3121
- President Bush - www.whitehouse.gov or 202-456-1111

"If every member of the house and senate had received 100 letters from people back home saying we have to do something about Rwanda, when the crises was first developing, then I think the response would have been different"

- Former US Senator Paul Simon