



**Friends of
the Earth**

How to: reach targeted audiences

How can you recruit new people to your local group with the skills your group particularly needs? And how do you reach specific groups of people within your community?

Claudia Sartori from Friends of the Earth's Capacity Building team reports

Target and relevance

In the last issue we gave you advice on energising and maintaining a healthy group. Now let's take a closer look at the human resources within your group. You may have a great people organiser but do you have a whiz with computers? You've got an experienced treasurer, but have you got an outgoing party animal to plan your social events?



Anna Fraser/Friends of the Earth

Follow our two-step guide to identify the personnel needs within your group and create 'officer roles'. Compile a list of the skills you need and have a brainstorming session for suggestions of where you might find them, what media will be effective in attracting them and what language will get their attention. For example, your list might look like this:

Who

Students and teachers

Ethnic minorities

People with free time

People with similar interests

People with specific skills

Where

Schools, colleges, universities, libraries, pubs, on the web.

Religious institutions, community centres.

Careers offices, job centres, volunteer bureaus, retired.

Sympathetic organisations, community events, ethical companies, health food shops, bike shops, organic cafes, recycling centres, consumer groups, young parents, railway stations, bus stops, vets.

Workplaces (e.g. of council officers, engineers, accountants, health professionals, IT workers, solicitors, planners, designers, writers).



Both: Ingram Publishing

Right on target: if you want to reach teenagers, you could use some teachers on your side; try holding family friendly meetings to get the attention of people with young children.

The two-step plan

1 ▶

Identify your needs

Here is an exercise you may find useful; it may help you to pinpoint a new audience which you need to target. Take ten minutes to discuss these points among your group:

1. Have you seen any adverts for your local group recently? Would you have noticed them if you weren't already a member? What made you notice your local group when you first joined?

2. Imagine how your group would be if... You had one person working on climate issues, one person developing your website, and two people working on recruitment.
3. Bearing these possibilities in mind, discuss what skills you currently have in the group. What skills do you need on present or future campaigns? What could new people do when they walk through that door?

2 ▶

Create officer roles

Having identified the areas in which new people would be useful, it may be worth restructuring your group to create defined 'officer' roles. As their co-ordinator was leaving, Cardiff Friends of the Earth did just that. Cardiff's James Maiden explains:

"With knowledge of past campaigns, likely future campaigns, and our group members' interests, we were able to sub-divide our work into five campaign areas. We needed a Co-ordinator, a Treasurer, and someone to update the website. The group recognised that there was one person who was well qualified for the post of Co-ordinator, and some gentle persuasion led him (me!) to accept. Our current Treasurer was competent, so we didn't need to find a replacement. In deciding who was going to be responsible for the website we

were lucky; we have two people who can do it and they share the workload. The Campaign Officers were selected after considering peoples' interests and experiences. Some had related work experience, so they were obvious choices. The other roles were filled by people who had some knowledge or were keen to gain experience and develop their understanding of issues. Other group members help out when needed.

"The structuring has been helpful for spreading the workload of the Co-ordinator and it is also good that members of the public can easily contact the relevant person – we have email addresses that make things simple, e.g. waste@foecardiff.co.uk. When we approach the Council and other organisations, it sounds professional to have an Energy Officer."

Targeted recruitment: how it works

Students

What and where:

Stalls at Freshers Fairs (check costs, as some universities charge corporate prices), leaflets and posters on campus, membership discounts through shops (bicycle and book shops). Make links and discuss options with lecturers, contact other societies (People & Planet and the Students Union).

Why:

Time availability for certain periods of the year. You may have research projects which would fit with their

course. They may be motivated by gaining work experience for a career in the environment.

Example:

Birmingham Friends of the Earth is well placed to make use of students, as there are three universities in the city. Dave Clare and James Botham explain:



We made links with the People & Planet university groups, letting them know about our actions, campaigns and socials. We registered with an Active Community Volunteer Placement

scheme. People hear about us through our website. We have had many placements from all parts of the world, including university students, back-to-work schemes for the unemployed, and school work experience students.

“To give an example: we had a placement who worked on a response to a waste management consultation. They researched best practice from other cities and worked with waste campaigners from the group to put in a response.”

Families

What and where:

Stalls at school fetes; displays at the library, doctors' surgeries, vets, religious institutions; adverts or inserts in other community group magazines e.g. National Childbirth Trust, nurseries and kids' clubs.

Why:

Concern for the food they feed their kids, about getting them to school safely, wanting to be better informed to educate their children.

Example:

North Lancs local group decided



Walsall Friends of the Earth

Child's play: Walsall stall had children's activities as a feature of their stall.

there was a need for involving people based on their motivations and interests. They set up the Family Friendly group (see *How to: energise your group* in the

last issue). It has produced a leaflet called *How to be an environmentally cool family* which includes ten ideas on how to make small changes to your lifestyle to make a big difference.

Walsall Friends of the Earth has developed a way to keep children entertained and educated while their parents talk to the group members. Rebecca Hemming says:



We have a 'fill the recycling box' game, a word finder worksheet and a poster with lift up flaps which says how much waste goes into landfill per person.”

Community residents

What and where:

Community meetings; Community Network teams; schools; youth clubs; events; allotment associations; religious groups.

Why:

You share your community with everyone; to make a change you need them to understand the issues and to know what they can do to make a difference.

Example:

South Tyneside Co-ordinator Simon Winch says:



Our group is made up of people who want to take action and do something. We know that if we are going to see a change we must be accepted and trusted in the communities in which we work. The poorer communities want to see a tangible outcome from an interaction with Friends of the Earth. Instead of being told that a rainforest has been saved in Brazil, they want to see a benefit in their local environment, e.g. if a certain level of recycling is reached, the Council might build a playground. Working with an immediate and achievable incentive is a significant

first step towards increased environmental awareness.”

Teacher and local group member Lindsey Collis has been teaching seven and eight year-olds about recycling and litter. The result has been amazing – children now hassle their parents to recycle, and people who drop litter are scorned. Lukes Lane Community School, where Lindsey works, has won its Bronze Ecoschools Award, is working towards Silver, and has been awarded special recognition by the Council as the school that has made the most environmental progress.”

How to...Pull-out section

Specific skill holders

What and where:

Place an advert where people may want experience, e.g for help with your website place it at a college for people on IT courses; for help with your books place it with trainee accountants.

Why:

If you are clear about the skills you are looking for, you may attract someone who had never realised that their skills could be used for an environmental cause.

Example:

Manchester Friends of the Earth wants to recruit members with an interest in campaigning on food issues.

“ We want to expand the number of shops and businesses on our website www.realfoodguide.org.uk” says Dave Coleman, Joint Co-ordinator. A membership flyer will be distributed through the 40 shops and cafes featured in the guide, and a recruitment poster will be placed in the head office of The Vegetarian Society.

Manchester Friends of the Earth



Glorious food: Manchester Friends of the Earth launched their Real Food website at a local farmers' market, therefore directly targeting people with an interest in food issues.

Separately, we have identified that as a group we have a poor understanding of the planning process and are approaching local universities' planning departments with a recruitment poster. Rather than environmental campaigners becoming experts in planning, we hope to recruit expert planners interested in environmental campaigning. We have also made sure that our local group webpage www.foe.co.uk/manchester, and our own website, have up-to-date

campaign information, pictures of us having fun, information about social events, details of when and where we meet, and what skills we feel that we need in the group. We found that younger people in particular are attracted via the web, as this is the first place they tend to think of looking for information. The web is also a great way to let new people to an area know about the group and what opportunities there are to meet like-minded people.”

Top tips to reach your audience

★ Downloadable resources

Change your world's pull-outs *How to: design effectively*, *How to: campaign strategise*, *How to: design your own website*, and *How to: use the media* can be found at <http://community.foe.co.uk/resource/> or by calling Naomi Hunt on 020 7566 1677.

★ Design

Make your message stand out through effective use of text and pictures, and use your visual identity to good effect. *How to: design effectively* is full of great tips. Some other overarching points to remember are: make sure your communication is accurate, honest, concise and respectful, and write in good, plain English.

★ Media

Spread your word via newsletters, free local newspapers, exhibitions, posters and displays, use of existing leaflets on different issues, local cable TV channels, talks to other community groups, PowerPoint presentations about Friends of the Earth, an up-to-date website, email, mailing to Friends of the Earth supporters, street stalls, and actions.

★ Online

Get your own webpage, by emailing localgroups@foe.co.uk. Manchester Friends of the Earth recently studied where new people at meetings had found out about them. It found that of the 10 most recent new attendees, one had come through a poster in a Real Food Guide shop, but the other nine had ALL come through the web.