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Your Guide to ActionAid Live

and being a part of our Global Emergencies Team!



Huw Stephens DJ's in the ActionAid tent at Reading Festival 2011
Photo: ActionAid/Henry Nicholls

Welcome to the team...

Being part of our Global Emergencies Team means that when disaster strikes, you strike back. By being just a little bit prepared, you can ensure that when the time is right you are ready to start drumming your way into action.

Putting on a gig can be simple. Whether you're organising one from scratch, or if you're in a band and want to start organising your own, this guide will help to ensure that you've got all the basics covered. Either way we hope that this will help you to be a successful part of our emergency first response and an even greater part of ActionAid Live.



1. Choosing the right event for you...

Whether you're a band, a musician or promoter; organising a gig is a great way to raise money and your own profile. It's important to pick an event that works for you, your audience and your local area. Do some research to find out what sort of music events are popular. From cabaret to samba, karaoke to battle of the bands, there's something for everyone.

Think outside the box – music doesn't have to just be in your local pub.

Organising a buskathon through the city centre is a guaranteed way of getting an audience, whilst adding some UV paint and lights to your local DJ night can add something extra special to encourage people to donate!



Reading Festival 2011. Photo: ActionAid/Henry Nicholls

2. Finding a venue

Managers are more likely to give you their venue for FREE if you choose a day when they're not that busy, so you may have to avoid Saturday nights. Remind them it's for charity and that you'll be promoting their venue as well as your night. There are lots of things to take into consideration when selecting your venue. Some of the most important include:



ActionAid at the Borderline, Soho.
Photo: ActionAid/Kristian Buus

LOCATION If you're off the beaten track, you will be less likely to pull in passers-by.

CAPACITY Be realistic. The place will look a lot fuller if it's smaller, so think about numbers.

EQUIPMENT Many venues will have a full PA system, sound desk and lighting. These are all really important factors at your gig so make things easier by finding somewhere with it!

SECURITY If you're in a bar or nightclub, the chances are security will be provided.

However, if you're in a hall or outdoors and you think that there might be large numbers you will need to look into hiring professional help. You can try professional companies such as Assist Security www.assistsecurity.co.uk or Showsec International www.showsec.co.uk. Make sure that any professional security person you hire has a valid, in date SIA badge.

3. Keeping it legal

There are often different licences and permissions that are required for fundraising that aren't immediately obvious. Check with your local council. Don't just wing it! Many venues will already have all the licences required. But, make sure you check!

If you are collecting money, organising a raffle, holding an event outdoors, selling goods, serving alcohol and more, the chances are you'll need a licence. If you're unsure, check out www.how2fundraise.org for guidance, or get in touch with the ActionAid Team.

4. Booking the bands

There are literally thousands of bands, DJs, artists and musicians out there. If you are part of a band this is a great way to start promoting yourself. However, there are loads of others out there who would love the opportunity to perform.

Getting out into your local music scene is a great way to find undiscovered talent. Independent music shops often harbour a wealth of talent so get talking to the locals about who they know and what they do.



BTP Music Tour. Photo: ActionAid

Sites such as Soundcloud, Bandcamp or the ActionAid Global Emergencies Facebook account is a great way to talk to others in your area and get a free snapshot of their sound. Most bands will have a website, where you can make contact. But, talking on the phone is always the best way of getting a clear yes or no. If you're talking to a slightly bigger name then they may send you a contract.

5. Booking an MC

The best gigs and music nights have a local name, comedian or enthusiastic person to hold the night together and keep things running smoothly. They will introduce the acts and keep the crowd warm in between the acts. See if you can find someone well known in your area to help out. If not just ask a friend!

6. Tickets and Promotions

Did you know that ActionAid beat the world record for largest air guitar ensemble? Adding something a little bit special to your gig can get people talking and makes your event more appealing in a very competitive market.

The main way to get people through the door is good promotion. Whether this is utilising your friends, family and bands' contacts or bringing in new audiences or regular punters of the venue, people need to hear about the event in order to know when and where to turn up!



ActionAid breaks the Guinness World Record. Photo: ActionAid/Aubrey Wade

Social networks such as Facebook and Twitter are an easy way to get people talking about your event. Set up an event and ask anyone to invite everyone. Utilise your ActionAid Live Twibbon on your Facebook, Twitter pages or website to get people talking. Use the ActionAid Live logo on your website as a banner.

Getting in touch with your local newspaper or radio station can help get the word out to the public. Use our “how to get great publicity” resource to get more top tips!

Don't forget that ActionAid has a very dedicated PR team who can help you find your local press contacts and even give you guidance when writing press releases or making contact. Don't be afraid to use them – they don't bite.



ActionAid Live also has a partnership with WeGotTickets – an easy and effective way of selling tickets for your event. Wegottickets will be donating 20% of all booking fees for ActionAid Live Events back to ActionAid. They also enable all your customers to make an additional donation to ActionAid when buying their tickets as well as enabling you to easily pay money from your event direct to ActionAid. Add your event to the official ActionAid Live ticketing site at www.wegottickets.com/actionaidlive. Take a look at our guide on “How to sell your tickets” to get a step-by-step guide on how to register your event with wegottickets. You can also ask people to donate via our online fundraising website, www.myactionaid.org.uk. Be realistic with your ticket prices – don't aim too high – you might end up scaring people off.

7. Equipment

The only way to guarantee that your event runs smoothly is to hire a sound and lighting technician. Some venues will come with someone in place who can do this for you. Otherwise, it's a case of finding someone to help out. Local churches, schools, bars should all have someone with the skills.

If you're bringing in a PA system yourself make sure you check that you've got the right bits. The bands and performers will want to do a sound check before they start the show. Remember that each microphone and instrument will need to have their individual sound levels checked to make sure that all the sounds come together in the right way. Find out how many people are in each band and what instruments they'll be bringing, and let the sound technician know in advance.

Ask the headliners to let you know the layout of their band, and then try to set up your other acts in a similar format. Let them know the drill before they turn up to perform to avoid upsetting anyone.

8. Good Etiquette

It is always a good idea to check in with the bands a few days before the gig to go over last minute logistics. Send them an email to finalise details like directions, soundcheck time, stage times, backline and so forth and follow this up with a phone call. The bands should know:

- What time to turn up to soundcheck
- What time (roughly) they'll be onstage
- The running order – make sure this is clear
- How long their set should be
- How to find the venue
- Your phone number and that of the venue if possible



Simian Mobile Disco DJ in the ActionAid tent at Reading Festival 2011
Photo: ActionAid/Henry Nicholls

If your bands, promoters or assistants have offered to play the gig for free, then it is always good etiquette to offer the artists a free drink and/or cover some of their travel expenses. Do an extra bit of fundraising beforehand, or put some money aside to make sure everyone feels appreciated.

ON THE DAY

If at all possible, you should be at the venue at the beginning of the soundcheck, even if you just end up sitting around with little to do! You should make sure all of the bands know who you are, so they know who



Carlou D, Free the hungry billion concert, Nairobi, Kenya
Photo: ActionAid/Riccardo Gangale

to come to if they have any questions or problems throughout the night.

Re-introduce yourself to whoever is managing the venue that night and assure them that if there are any problems to give you a shout. Sort out stage times and length of changeover period in conjunction with the soundman. The headline band should be there first to soundcheck, a couple of hours or so before doors, with the other band(s) turning up a little later.

9. Raising Extras

There are always extra ways of asking guests to donate. The easiest way is through a set ticket price or donation on the door. Try asking your artists to do a “plea” out to the audience mid-way through their set. £1 in a bucket from every guest can go a long way. Emergencies often get a lot of public sympathy so this can often be more effective than just asking for charity donations. Try asking the band members to auction off a free ticket to their next gig, or a piece of treasured merchandise.

We can also send you collection tins and buckets to put on the bar or on the tables. Try adding in a raffle, or an interactive game to help raise some extra pennies. See if the bar will make an ActionAid Live cocktail and give you a percentage of the donations.

10. Thank you

When it's all over don't forget to thank everyone involved and pay your money in via wegottickets, myactionaid or send in your funds via cheque with one of our payment forms (available online). If you'd like to transfer your funds then contact us at events@actionaid.org for details or contact our payments team on 01460 23 800.



Fake Problems supporting ActionAid at Reading Festival 2009
Photo: ActionAid/Aubrey Wade

Thank you for supporting ActionAid Live!