

Making a project work



▶ Little planning (for a meeting or a workshop)

Make a checklist/discuss the following things before you meet or hold your workshop:

What is the meeting about? What do we want to do?

To answer these questions, you may want to decide what you want to have accomplished by the end of the meeting. For example,

Sue says: "Let's come up with a list of everyone who wants to staff our display on Latin America next week."

Tasha says: "We need to know if people think we should invite the principal to speak on the first day of our event."

Mario says: "We need to decide who we'll invite to our Oceans Day celebration."

James says: "I think we need to decide when we have to staff the display. There's no point staffing it at recess since no one will be inside."

Before you make a list of volunteers to staff the table, you have to decide when it will be staffed. There is usually an order to discussing things – an order that makes sense in terms of time and importance. This is called an "agenda". It's good to have an agenda before the meeting starts, and to share it with everyone who attends so they will know what to expect.

You also need to set a limit on the time the meeting will run. Group members then decide what the most important issues are. In the example above, you could try to cover Mario's point about Oceans Day, but since the display on Latin America happens first, this project should be the priority. Nobody likes to spend his or her valuable time discussing small details. If you find that your group is spending too much time discussing details such as what kind of juice to have at your meeting with the teachers' committee, assign these tasks to one person or a smaller group of people who can work on the task outside of the larger meeting time. When you all get together as a group, the smaller group can report back: "We finished the job."

▶ Big planning (global education and environmental events, activities, special days, fundraisers)

When planning a large project or event, ask group members to answer the following questions:

What do you want to accomplish?

What resources and skills do you already have as a group?

How can you get the other skills and resources needed?

How will you get other people interested? (publicity, invitations, support from teachers, etc.)

When and where? (Do you have enough space, enough time, permission to use the facilities?)

If students in your school learn about a problem, they may want to raise money for projects that are helping people overcome that problem. An event that raises money is also called a "benefit" because it benefits, or helps, people. Research different organizations and decide which you would like to help. Request information from the organization to help you explain why you chose this organization and how the money will be used. You can hold a celebration and charge admission, hold an event where people sponsor you, or sell something you make or get donated.

If you are fund-raising, how do you know you will be able to make some money? Is there a demand for the items that you're selling?

Discuss the schedule for the day: who will welcome people and thank them for coming?

Who will staff/supervise the activities?

Don't forget to thank everyone involved, including all the club members who have made the event a success.

Evaluate what you have learned and what you would change if you did it again. Plan your next fun, exciting event!

Also, think about sharing this experience with other students. You'll find that many of the situations your group has experienced have been experienced by other student groups as well.

