



'Let Them Work: Action Day 2009'

Initial core idea for Action Day stunt

Sunday workshop, 16th November 08

Key message: People who *can* work are being *denied* the opportunity to support themselves

- Dress as workers (doctors, farmers, chefs, footballers, teachers...), include as many props as you like
- Tie hands, stand still on marked footprints, wear mask, etc to create image of people being denied the opportunity to work
- Keep symbolic (don't confuse issue with detention and torture)
- Elaborate with stall, loudspeaker, a march, a sleepout (still dressed as workers) etc.
- Perform on campus or city centre

Below are the ideas of members in the workshop as scribbled down on post-it notes. We hope they're useful in kick-starting your planning for Action Day 2009. A document is being produced which will outline 2-3 core stunts for groups to perform on Action Day. This will be circulated before January.

If you have any comments, then please get in touch with James Fisher on 020 8980 7036 ext. 205, or email students@star-network.org.uk

Your ideas

How can you communicate the impact of poverty, isolation, de-skilling?

- Case studies – stories from asylum seekers wanting to work – vital to show suffering
- Clear facts
- Role reversed: invite the public to consider what it might be like to be an asylum seeker without work
- Use negative terms that public use, e.g. sponge, in demonstration – so put sponges in bin and have signs saying 'we would like to work and contribute' to turn negatives into positives.
- Dress in torn clothes with signs saying 'I'd like to support myself' or money in cap/box saying 'I don't want your charity'

How can you elaborate on the basic 'dressing up' stunt?

- Everyone dress up and spell out 'Let Them Work', then have people giving out leaflets, etc (could take it in turns)
- Anyone could turn up and do it – have spare costumes?
- Stunt can involve case studies, e.g. dressing up and mimicking a particular asylum story
- TUC members (good idea) – students respond to people coming from outside campus
- Holding more than one event in one day – inc. lecturer mini-strike and students dressing up. Issue is raised twice in one day, reach wide audience
- Target and educate the lower socio-economic classes – raise awareness at job centres etc. These are not converted.

- Week leading up to Action Day: events; living on £35 etc to raise awareness before main stunt; publicise in student media etc.
- 'Working for the right to work': Providing services: medical clinic; café? (business donations – health and safety); shoe shine?

How can you get the media interested?

- Advance details sent to free sheets; local radio stations; student media; and all other local media including Big Issue.
- Have a communications/press officer who will contact various agencies in good time and get them to come along and write articles for the uni paper.
- Send media letters explaining intent, or photos after event describing turn out

How can you link with other groups?

- Through the STAR national website – the forum
- Facebook groups – use national network to post on message boards or create an online forum with another server

What support might you need from the national team?

- Move Action Day forward to have it as a start of a few week campaign, inc. speakers, asylum monologues, films, awareness raising, etc
- Regular contact, support with getting in contact with media/getting permission
- Briefing with facts, explanations for confrontations

How could you involve refugees?

- Very important to consult with refugees, they can help us with further details/human stories and the basic stunt once decided

Concerns:

Dressing up

- Accessible? People dressing up is common and hard and expensive to be done effectively
- Don't make it too much effort to get involved! People can come and commit for as long as they can?
- New motto: 'let us make contribution'. Problem: dressing up as professions gives impression that they should be entitled to work without conversion over skilled immigrants who must go through process – emphasise how asylum seekers wish to make a contribution/retain dignity (keeps separate from immigration)

Lecturer min-strike

- Depending on time, don't want to penalise students who are there to learn and are paying to do so – also might be university policies against this sort of action (private property)
- Would be uni lecturers making an anti-Gov policy – aren't allowed to do this?
- Appropriately timing 5 minute lecture silence by lectures: either should be repeated throughout the day or maybe have a week of lecturer activities

- Why not expand lecturer activities to posters outside lecture rooms for those lecturers who'll join in actions
- Concern about distinguishing between immigration and asylum, particularly when working with the TUC.
- Ensure the action event does not clash with notable/news worthy event taking place in the town that day or afternoon