Ten Tips for More Inclusive Events

When you are organising an event, here are some things to think about as you plan.

N.B.: This is not an exhaustive list; it is more of a starting point. There's always more to learn. :-)

# What and Why?

It's important to consider what kind of event you are running – talk, workshop, panel, focus group, other – and what is its purpose or aim.

Is it interactive or passive?

Is it a group setting or one-one?

Will this format allow full engagement for all attending?

For example, if you are seeking active input from your attendees, it would it be worth considering more than one format, so that those who are comfortable speaking in front of groups and those who aren’t would each have a framework within which they are comfortable engaging.

# When?

Is it clashing with an important religious or UN date?

Or during Ramadan, when Muslims are fasting, are you scheduling an all-day, full event-listing with no time to rest?

Can people with caring commitments meet them if they wish to attend?

Is it scheduled at a time when people get leave from their work to attend?

# Where?

Where are you holding your event?

Is it online? Is it on an accessible platform that is free and has live captions or transcript function?

Is it in person? Is it in a location that is easily physically accessible?

Have you ‘walked the walk’, i.e., have you checked that there are no temporary obstacles in place, which would not necessarily be recorded on booking platforms?

Is it in a location that is socially or culturally accessible, i.e., is it an inviting space or is it intimidating or has negative associations for your audience?

Is it a hybrid event? If so, how are you planning on managing engagement with a split audience?

Is there parking, for bikes or cars?

Is there a quiet space or somewhere to breastfeed?

# Who?

Who is on your organising team?

Who will be presenting?

Is it a diverse group?

Is it representative of the target audience?

If not, are you consulting more widely? (“Nothing about us without us.”)

Who will be in the audience?

Are you reaching your intended audience?

Is there a possibility that there may be contentious elements in your audience (if you are approaching a divisive topic)?

If yes, is there a plan in place to manage situations that may arise?

# Cost

If you have a budget, is any of it set aside for Irish Sign Language (ISL) interpretation, should it be required, translation services or captioning of video footage, for example?

Is there a payment required to attend?

If yes, is there an unwaged option?

Is the payment only taken online or is there a payment method for those with limited/no access to the internet, or those who do not have bank cards?

Aside from explicit ticket price, are there other costs to be considered for attendees, such as childcare, transport, time, days off work or other?

Are people losing a day’s pay to attend?

Can any of these costs be ameliorated?

Are your vendors ethical?

Are you buying merchandising?

Is it sustainable?

Is it necessary?

Could the money be better spent elsewhere on inclusion measures?

# Communications

Is everything going out online? Are you excluding those who don’t follow social media?

Are the fonts and colours suitable for the visually impaired?

Do your images have alt text?

Are your images representative?

Are your # readable by screen readers?

Is your language or terminology appropriate?

Are you actively seeking out alternative audiences to broaden your reach, e.g. through direct engagement or alternative advertising routes?

In the venue, is Loop or similar available for people wearing hearing aids?

# Catering

Are you providing catering?

If so, are you asking for dietary requirements?

Do these include options such as halal, kosher or vegan?

Are there any you can pre-empt and provide as standard?

Will the food be labelled and kept separate where necessary?

If you are providing alcoholic beverages, will there be a savoury non-alcoholic option?

# Outside of the Event

If you are holding a full-day or weekend event, consider providing your attendees with a guide to socialising in the city, noting LGBT+ spaces, spaces that are physically accessible, and alcohol-free zones.

Similar to social needs, consider adding a map to where people may locate somewhere for them to worship or pray – churches, chapels, synagogues, mosques or other, or where they may find childcare or kid-friendly spaces, if they will have their children with them.

# Don’t Worry

If it’s all a bit overwhelming, eat the elephant one bite at a time, as the adage goes, not all at once.

Every time you run an event (be it a talk, meeting, workshop, concert or whatever), if you are trying to make it more inclusive, it very probably is, at least more inclusive than the last time you ran something.

So, keep it up - little by little, we make the world a little better.

And at ediunit@ucc.ie, we're always here to help!

# The Grounds

A place to start can be to look at the Equal Status Grounds (listed below) and think about whether what you are planning will unwittingly exclude people when you take into account any/some/all of these considerations:

* Age
* Civil Status (e.g. married, civil partnership, single etc.)
* Disability
* Family Status (e.g. carers)
* Gender
* Member of the Traveller Community
* Race/Ethnicity
* Religion
* Sexual Orientation
* Socio-Economic

# For more information:

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