

Ideas for events

On 14 June 2006, your organization can join the global celebration to raise awareness of the importance of voluntary unpaid blood donation and to encourage new and existing blood donors to donate blood regularly throughout the year while maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Even if your country already holds a national blood donor day on a different date, World Blood Donor Day is a chance to highlight your activities as part of a wider global movement of solidarity.

The day also offers an opportunity to enlist the support of a wider set of actors—including nongovernmental organizations, the private sector and the media—as partners in the quest for universal access to safe blood. Coordinating your activities with others at all levels in your country will ensure maximum visibility and impact.

Objectives

World Blood Donor Day events should:

- Raise awareness of the importance of regular, voluntary, unpaid blood donation and a strong national blood donor programme in ensuring that safe blood is available to every patient who needs it
- Thank existing voluntary unpaid blood donors and encourage them to donate regularly;
- Recruit new, safe, voluntary blood donors;
- Encourage healthy donors who have given blood when required by a family or community member to become regular voluntary unpaid donors;
- Promote healthy lifestyles among blood donors to protect both their own health and that of the patients who receive their blood;
- Communicate the importance of the careful assessment of blood donors in ensuring that giving blood will not cause any adverse effects to either the donors themselves or the recipients of their blood—this includes the need for potential donors to be truthful in answering questions about their own health and lifestyle;
- Stress that anyone in the community can be involved in World Blood Donor Day and ongoing activities—even if they cannot give blood—for example by volunteering their time, donating funds, or encouraging others to donate blood.

Event ideas

While some of these ideas for events focus on the day itself, they include ongoing activities or collaborations that can be launched using World Blood Donor Day as a catalyst.

They have been grouped by primary goal, although many will in fact contribute to achieving multiple objectives.

The impact of many of these activities can be boosted by securing the participation of local and national politicians, community leaders and other public figures.

Raising awareness

- Hold seminars, lectures, debates, quizzes (including radio/TV) on blood donation and related themes;
- Hold "open days" at blood centres, paying special attention to warm welcomes and information displays;
- Plan "Health Tours": vehicles driving through urban and rural areas to distribute information on voluntary unpaid donation;
- Organize competitions for the most creative banners, slogans, posters, stickers, T-shirts, caps, pens or essays;
- Distribute posters, leaflets, badges and other items featuring information on blood donation to the general public;
- Encourage curriculum coordinators to incorporate information about blood donation and blood transfusion in education programmes;
- Organize sponsored walks to raise public awareness and use the proceeds to support ongoing activities.

Thanking existing blood donors and encouraging regular donation and healthy lifestyles

- Relay thank-you messages to blood donors using songs, postcards, balloons, display walls, letters from patients, telephone calls, text messages, newspaper advertisements, letters to the media, greeting cards signed by local/national celebrities;
- Organize awards ceremonies with local/national officials for regular blood donors, including certificates or other tokens of recognition for milestones such as 25, 50 or 100 donations;
- Set up a "Wall of Fame" in the community featuring individuals who have made a large number of donations as well as messages of thanks from patients who have received blood transfusion;
- Hold a party to bring together long-serving donors and young donors who have recently given blood for the first time; invite a guest speaker, such as a well-known person who has received blood;

- Start a campaign to encourage blood donors to mark their birthdays by "Giving the Gift of Blood";
- Organize a concert for young donors, celebrating their involvement and stressing the importance of a healthy, low-risk lifestyle;
- Enlist doctors and nurses to portray blood donors as "partners in health" and to relay messages about the importance of staying healthy to donate blood responsibly;
- Contact regular voluntary donors to explore their interest in setting up a voluntary blood donor association.

Recruiting new blood donors

Experience shows that regular donors tend to be the best recruiters of new donors and that personal communication is one of the most effective means of spreading the word.

- Produce a leaflet for use on World Blood Donor Day and beyond, urging existing blood donors to encourage healthy friends and family members to become donors;
- During "open days" at blood centres, offer blood-group testing and the opportunity to sign up as a blood donor;
- Set up a website and/or toll-free telephone number that people can use to obtain information and to register as blood donors;
- Create "pledge forms" enabling people to pledge to become regular donors, and distribute them widely, for example in banks, shops, post offices and in the street;
- Encourage school, community and professional theatre groups to produce plays highlighting the need for safe blood donors;
- Work with schools, colleges and universities to form blood donor clubs and Club 25 initiatives (see "Club 25" sheet in this campaign kit); provide donors with testimonials for inclusion in their CVs;
- Involve schools in encouraging students to give their first donation of blood on the day they are legally recognized as adults;
- Organize sporting events involving blood donors and the community, such as football matches or a "walk for life": seeing healthy athletes as blood donors shows that giving blood does not harm an individual's health;
- Develop partnerships with sporting groups to promote the recruitment of blood donors from their young and healthy membership base.

Mobilizing the media and the private sector to promote blood donation

- Contact national and local media in advance of World Blood Donor Day to secure their interest and support; provide them with information and "good news" stories about blood donors and patients and ask them to support an ongoing campaign to recruit voluntary blood donors;
- Invite journalists to donate blood and report on their experience;
- Produce a short television or radio spot promoting voluntary blood donation, if possible featuring a local/national celebrity; ask national and radio services to broadcast it free as a public service announcement;

- Propose the inclusion of a storyline relating to safe blood donation in a popular television or radio soap or drama;
- Involve local businesses by encouraging them to promote World Blood Donor Day in their marketing campaigns and organize blood collection sessions in their workplaces; use the business pages of newspapers to thank participating companies;
- Ask mobile phone companies to promote World Blood Donor Day by sending text messages to their subscribers on 14 June 2006;
- Ask banking organizations to put World Blood Donor Day messages on the screens of their automatic teller machines.

Building other partnerships

- Enlist doctors and nurses to encourage people who donated blood when it was needed by a family member or friend to become regular voluntary unpaid donors;
- Work with patient associations to encourage members relying on transfusion (for example, for haemophilia, thalassaemia, sickle cell disease, trauma and cancer) to write letters of thanks to newspapers, take part in radio/TV spots, speak in schools, and write letters to politicians about the importance of a strong national blood transfusion service;
- Ask university departments of education, media studies, marketing and computer studies for help with donor information and education materials, such as leaflets, websites and videos;
- Enlist the support of the ambulance, fire and police services for donor awareness and recruitment campaigns;
- Enlist religious, women's, community, youth and national service organizations (e.g. Rotary Clubs, Scouts, Lions Clubs) to plan World Blood Donor Day activities and ongoing education, awareness and recruitment programmes.