

# Putting the Human Back in Human Rights

A Step By Step Guide  
to Running a Successful  
Informational Meeting

2007



2007

Here at Amnesty International we are about creating concrete social change & building a movement.

The work that Amnesty International activists have done has helped to free more than **40,000 Prisoners of Conscience** around the world, has raised awareness about the **crisis in Darfur**, and has led to the UN's adoption of the **Convention Against Torture**.

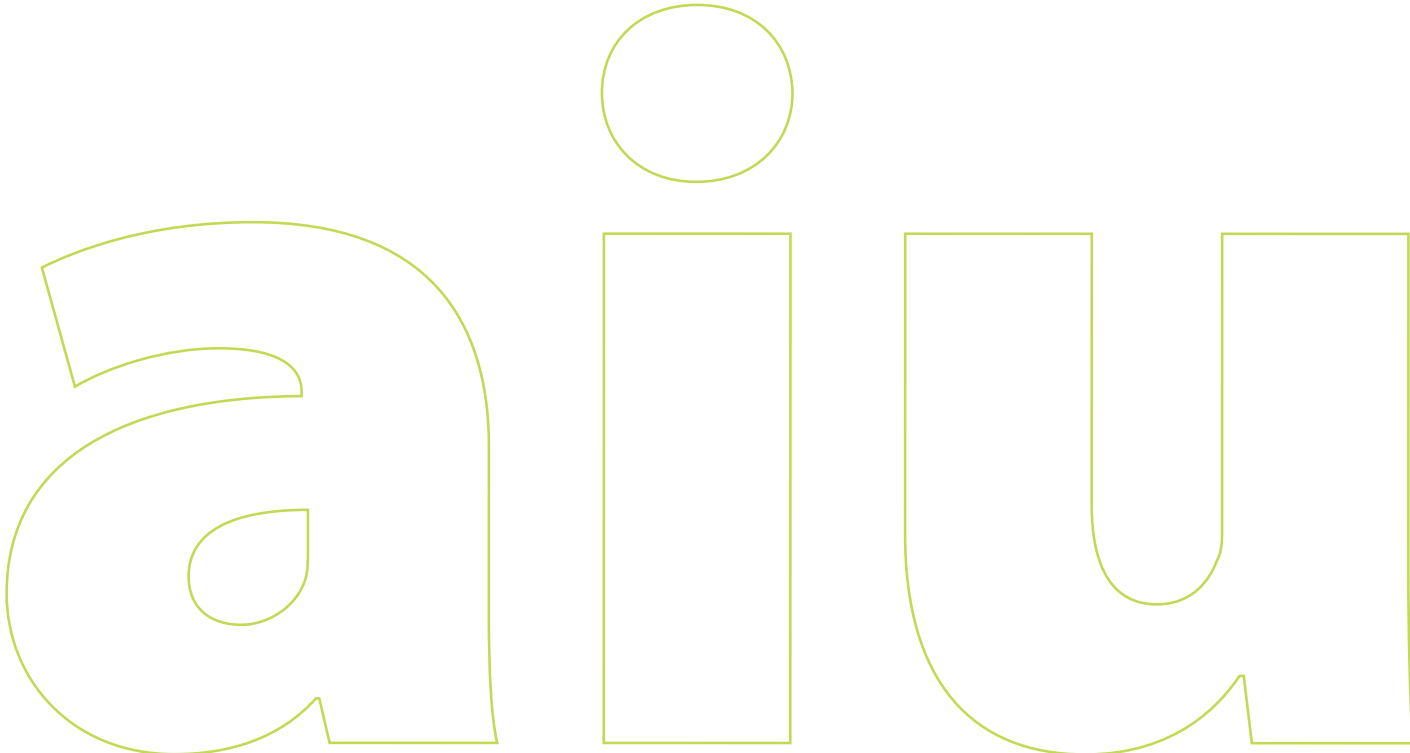
...but to continue getting these results we need to get more people involved.

In this packet you will find a step by step guide to holding an informational meeting that will help your group grow and will us continue our tradition of making social change happen.

**PUTTING THE HUMAN BACK IN HUMAN RIGHTS**



**Holding a Great Informational Meeting is the First Step**



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**in Recruiting to Build the Human Rights Movement**

**SSa**

# Think Recruiting, Act Recruiting & Be Recruiting

*Recruiting should begin early in the school year (ideally even before you arrive back at school) and should continue throughout the year.*

## Getting Ready for the Meeting • Spread the Word

How are people going to know about the great work your group is going to do this year if no one ever tells them about it?

Here are some ideas about places and ways to get the word out.

### In the High School Classroom

- Ask teachers to:
  - o Announce your group meeting in their classes.
  - o Pass out a sign up sheet.
  - o Put your contact information & the group meeting day, time, and location on the board.
  - o Hang a poster about your first meeting in their classrooms.
  - o Give extra credit to students who participate in your actions or attend your meetings.
  - o Write the day, date, location and time of your next meeting on the board in their classroom (be sure to ask them to also write “do not erase”).
  - o Talk to your classmates about your next meeting.

### In the College Classroom

- Ask professors to:
  - o Announce your group meeting in their classes.
  - o Let you come to their class(es) to give a 3-5 minute presentation to their class about opportunities with Amnesty.
    - \* Pass out interest cards for students to fill out their contact information and what campaigns they are interested in learning more about. There is a sample in the appendix.
    - \* Put your contact information & the group meeting day, time, and location on the board.
  - o Hang a poster about your first meeting in their classrooms.
  - o Send an email out to their students announcing your next meeting.
  - o Give extra credit to students who participate in your actions or attend your meetings.
  - o Write the day, date, location and time of your next meeting on the board in their classroom (be sure to ask them to also write “do not erase”).
  - o Talk to your classmates about your next meeting.

## Around Campus

Each high school & college campus is a little different, so use the tactics that work best for your school.

### • Tabling

Tabling is an effective way to make Amnesty International more visible in your community. Your group can spread the word about its current work, announce upcoming events, recruit new members, and raise money by tabling. Tabling can also provide the public with an opportunity to get involved.

You can set up tables in places such as community festivals, art shows, special events, ethnic festivals, and local coffeehouses and bookstores. In schools, you can set up tables outside of dining halls or the cafeteria, the student union, school library or any place where students gather.

### Table Set Up

- Check to see if you need to reserve a table.
- The appearance of the table should invite passers-by to stop and check it out.
- Make sure people can see that it is an Amnesty table.
- It is important to create a “self help” space where people can walk up and easily find a general Amnesty brochure and a clear example of Amnesty’s work (a petition or postcard with background information).
- Use music or video to draw attention to your table. Show the short version of the Amnesty membership video or play music.

### Ideas on how to strike up a conversation

- Stand in front of the table
- Be friendly and invite passers-by to stop at the table.
- Make sure you have the information necessary to answer general questions about Amnesty and the organization’s work.
- Some people may feel intimidated to walk up and ask questions; make sure you acknowledge each person, welcome them to your table and try to engage them in conversation.
- Initiate conversations with table visitors. Ask: “Are you familiar with the work of Amnesty International?” “Have you heard of our Stop Violence Against Women Campaign?” “Are you interested in a particular country or issue?” While it is important to greet each person, respect those who may not want to have a conversation, but just want to browse.

### Check List:

- Do you have a banner? (If not, check with your regional office about how to get one)
- Do you have the membership video? (Your regional office can help you get these too)
- Order or download Amnesty flyers
- Create a flyer for your group (there are samples in this packet)
- Use the sign in sheet (there is a sample in this packet)
- Check with your regional office about which actions to highlight
- Put out a donation jar, if permitted

### Expert Tip:

If you plan to have food at your event, make sure to mention that in all of your advertising materials and conversations!

- Posters

**FIRST:** Check your school's poster policy (some schools allow you to do more than others).

- o Print them off on bright, colorful paper that will grab people's attention.
- o Don't be afraid to put more than one on each billboard.
- o Ask department secretaries and/or department heads to put posters up on their department bulletins.
- o Don't poster on trees.
- o As a general rule... only poster where other groups have poster (in other words don't poster in places where you'll get fined because it's against the rules/law to poster there).
- o Don't limit yourself to campus. You probably know (or can easily find out) where students like to hang out. Go there and ask if you can hang a poster in the window on the bulletin board near the bathroom, or in bathroom stalls.

- Sidewalk Chalk

- o Again, you'll want to check your school's policy about this, but it can be a great way to advertise.
- o Think of high traffic areas – like the cafeteria, library, gym, etc.
- o Use facts that will get people's attention.
- o Death penalty statistics.
- o Child soldier statistics.

- Table Tents – You've probably seen these before, they are cardstock folded in half and have information about your meeting on both sides. You can put these in:

- o Cafeteria
- o Library
- o Coffee shops
- o Lounges & other public study places

\* Be sure to print them off on bright, colorful paper that will grab people's attention.

- Flyers

- o Print them off on bright, colorful paper that will grab people's attention.
- o If your campus has student parking lots find a time to put a flyer on all of them.
- o Hand out flyers to people in the halls, student center, quad, or other areas with a lot of foot traffic times (be sure to do this during a busy part of the day & between classes)
- o Have flyers about your next meeting at every tabling event you do.
- o Have flyers with you everywhere you go – you never know when you'll have a chance to hand them out
- o Ask like-minded groups to advertise your events & meetings by having your flyers at their tabling events.

- Listservs

- o These days most groups have them, so now it's your job to get your meeting advertised on other people's list servs.
- o Contact academic departments and other groups (like minded clubs, sororities, fraternities, even the chess club might have members who would like to be a part of Amnesty's work) and ask them if they have a list serv and if they would mind telling people about your meeting.
- o Have a blurb about your meeting including date, time, and location ready to send them to include in their email.
- o If your school has a weekly email blast see if you can get your meeting announced.
- o Check to see if your school or local newspaper gives free or discounted space to advertise non-profit events.

- Social Networking Sites

- o You probably use facebook or myspace to keep in touch with friends, why not use it to recruit new human rights activists.
- o Advertise your meeting by creating a facebook or myspace group or cause
- o List your meeting as a myspace or facebook event and invite all of your friends to it
- o If your group has some money to spend on advertising for your event, facebook allows you to advertise with virtual "flyers". They will post 5,000 flyers to people in your network for \$10.
- o Post a bulletin on myspace.

- What else?

- o \_\_\_\_\_
- o \_\_\_\_\_
- o \_\_\_\_\_

**Expert Tip:**  
When in doubt, check to be sure your actions aren't breaking any campus policies. Get permission when you need to!

# Sell

3 minute  
class  
presentation  
about your  
Amnesty  
chapter



## Revise this to make it appropriate to you and your school.

### I. Introduction (20 seconds)

- a. You – your name, year in school, etc.
- b. Amnesty International
  - i. International Human Rights Organization with the mission of preventing and ending grave abuses of the rights to physical and mental integrity, freedom of conscience and expression, and freedom from discrimination, within the context of its work to promote all human rights.
  - ii. How long Amnesty has been at the school
  - iii. Describe a recent Amnesty victory – a good example would be if your group worked on a Prisoner of Conscience who was released recently.

### II. Current campaign (90 seconds) – Amnesty works on a lot of really important issues, but you won't be able to talk about all of them in the 3 minutes you have to describe your group, so pick one that you think will appeal to your audience.

- a. Problem - Describe what's happening that has caused your group to take on its current campaign.
- b. Solution - What your group is doing about the problem.
- c. Upcoming events – What are some exciting and strategic things your group is planning to do in the near future on this campaign.

### III. How to get involved (30 seconds)

- a. Sign up for more information
- b. Come to our next meeting
- c. Email me at [yourname@school.edu](mailto:yourname@school.edu)

### IV. Describe briefly why you got involved & why you think they should get involved (30 seconds)

- a. I joined Amnesty X years ago because...
- b. You should join because with Amnesty you will
  - i. Make a difference on really important issues
  - ii. You'll meet great people
  - iii. You will have a chance to gain leadership experience
  - iv. The world needs our generation to speak up and act

### V. Thank your audience & the professor who let you speak (10 seconds)

# Sell

## Revise this to make it appropriate to you and your school.

When you are tabling it is really important to describe Amnesty and get people engaged in our work in a short amount of time. Below is a sample conversation that you might have while tabling. Be sure to revise this so that it best fits you and your group.

### Greeting:

Do you have a minute for human rights/for Amnesty International/ to stop torture?

*If the person stops go on to the introduction, if they don't stop just say "ok, have a good day."*

### Introduction:

Excellent. My name is Nancy, what's yours?

*Let them answer*

### Background:

It's good to meet you. I am with Amnesty International. We work in more than 150 countries across the world to prevent and end grave human rights abuses.

### Campaign(s):

Right now we are working to stop the violence in Darfur, abolish the death penalty, stop violence against women, put an end to torture, and protect individuals who are at risk because of their beliefs.

*If your group is focused on one issue you can tailor the campaigns section to the work you are most focused on.*

### Appeal:

Are these issues you care about?

*If the person says yes invite them to the meeting and have them put their information on the sign up sheet, ask them to sign a petition, and give them a flyer about the meeting*

*If the person says no, give them some general information and thank them for stopping.*

**It.**

**Introducing  
Amnesty  
International  
in 30 Seconds  
or Less**

## Follow up!!!

This is a theme you will find in all of the work you do as an organizer. People may have signed up at your table and expressed interest in the organization, but they may not remember the exact time and date of your first meeting. REMIND THEM!

- Call them 3 days before, 2 days before, & 1 day before your meeting
- Email them a reminder with your contact information
- Put up a second round of posters, flyers, and sidewalk chalk

### Prepare for New Members

Now that you've done all of this great work to get people to your first meeting, it is really important to make sure that they have a great first experience with Amnesty.

- Make Welcome Packets – you should hand these out to all new members to give them a better sense of what Amnesty does and who we are. If you don't know where to get these materials call your field organizer.
  - o Welcome letter
  - o Brochures about campaigns and Amnesty International
  - o Instructions about how they can become a dues paying member of AIUSA – remember, students get a discount.
  - o A calendar of upcoming events (including group meeting dates, rallies, and social events)
  - o An action for them to do at the meeting – a sample letter
  - o Contact information
  - o Amnesty Acronym list
  - o A copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)
- DELEGATE!!! Let's face it, you are great. That's why you are coordinating your school's Amnesty group... but that probably also means you don't have time to do all of this on your own. Beyond that, people are more likely to become invested in your group if they feel like they have an important role to play.
  - o Here are some roles you can assign to group members:
    - \* New Member Coordinator – At all meetings, this person (or people) should make sure that all new members get welcome packets and have an experienced person sitting near them at meetings to get to know them, explain acronyms, and answer any questions they might have. After the meeting they will be responsible for following up with all new members to thank them for coming to the first meeting, answering their questions, and reminding them of upcoming meetings and events.
    - \* Logistics Coordinator – This person can help make sure that you have a good meeting space, that there is food to munch on, speakers to play music, etc. This person should be a detail oriented leader.
    - \* Social Events Coordinator – This person should make sure that there is a plan for hanging out and that these events are accessible to all.
    - \* Secretary – This person will keep minutes at all the meetings, send them out to all attendees, and making sure that all tasks that were assigned at the meeting get documented.

- Amnesty Resources – Use Them!

- o Student Area Coordinator (SAC) – Each student group is assigned an SAC to help them plan for the year, provide training, and overcome challenges. They will be checking in with you at least once a month to see how things are going, to tell you about upcoming state and regional events, and to provide assistance.

- o Field Organizer (FO) – Your SAC is your first resource, but your regional office has staff dedicated to recruiting and helping groups just like yours be successful. They provide materials, work with your SAC, and coordinate state and regional events and trainings.

- o Video List – The regional office has a list of videos that your group can show at meetings, a house party, or as part of an on campus film festival.

- o Speakers List – The regional office has a list of speakers that your group can invite to speak at your school.

- o Campaign materials – The regional office has campaign materials for you to use at your events. Contact your SAC and FO to find out more about the kinds of materials available.

- o Email Updates – Your regional office has a system for communicating with volunteer leaders about campaigns, events, trainings and other resources available. Contact your SAC to be sure you are signed up for those messages. And, once you start getting them, read the updates and use them at the meetings!

**Expert Tip:**

Keep a Welcome Packet with you whenever you are around campus. You never know when you'll run into a potential new member!

## Meeting Day Has Arrived!

### Before the Meeting: Set a Recruiting Tone

Recruitment isn't just about putting up posters and inviting people to meetings, it's also about making people feel comfortable once they've arrived.

- Choose a meeting location that is accessible - don't have it in a corner on the far side of campus on the top floor with no elevator access.
- Make sure that the time of the meeting is good for the people you are trying to recruit – just because 8 am fits your schedule doesn't mean it is a good time for all of the great people who might otherwise come to your meeting.

### At the Meeting: Set a Recruiting Tone

- Have greeters & minglers
- Have music on – it can cut the tension and make for less awkward silences as people find their way into the room
- Have stacks of welcome packets for all new attendees
- Watch out for “insider language” – if you use an acronym explain what it means (not everyone knows what ESCR means).
- Make the meeting interactive – don't just talk at people
  - o Have a movie or slide show.
  - o Do an action – have people write letters and sign petitions at the meeting.
  - o Get people on their feet – have group activities or brainstorm.
- The agenda for the meeting should be recruiting – make it fun, informative, & fast. There is a sample agenda in this packet and in the activist tool kit.
- Invite everyone to attend or do something.
  - o People get excited about having something to get involved in right away, not months down the line, so you will want to have an activity for them to participate in right away.
  - o Remember, it doesn't have to be the biggest event of the year to be recruiting.
  - o Have a sign up sheet and be sure to call and email everyone who says they want to go.

### After the Meeting: Set a Recruiting Tone

- Where possible have a social activity planned for immediately after the meeting.
  - o Be conscious of your crowd – make it welcoming to all (if you are getting food make sure everyone has options: not just meat or just vegetarian).

# SAMPLE INFORMATIONAL MEETING AGENDA – 60 Minutes

## Pre meeting

Mingle with those who have come; introduce yourself and use this opportunity to listen and learn as much as possible about them. Have drinks and snacks available if possible.

Have materials available for people to pick up and take home (eg. Brochures, Amnesty Now, Urgent Actions)  
Meeting

### 1. Introduction (10 Minutes)

- a. Introductions, starting with yourself and how you came to be involved with Amnesty – if the group is a reasonable size have everyone introduce themselves.
- b. Review agenda

### 2. AI history (5 minutes)

- a. Briefly present: How AI began, AI mission, and share some recent success stories.

### 3. AI work methods (10 minutes)

- a. Describe how AI works, using current examples when possible (as an advocacy organization we use a variety of methods-letter writing, contacting members of congress, campaigning, etc. to achieve our goals)
- b. Give an overview of the type of work student and local groups do

### 4. AI events and actions (20 minutes)

- a. Describe a current campaign
  - i. The campaign should be something you think the students at the meeting will care about.
  - ii. You should have a petition or letter writing action that the students can do at the meeting.
  - iii. Check with your SAC and the regional office to see if there are any campaign materials you can use for this portion of you meeting.
- b. Introduce upcoming events and possible actions for people to get involved in
- c. Get people to sign up for events or actions

### 5. Questions & answers (10 minutes)

- a. Don't be afraid if you don't know the answers to their questions, just write down their question and tell them you'll get back to them. HINT: This can be a good excuse to follow up with people.

### 6. Wrap up (5 minutes)

- a. Identify who is interested in signing up for events and actions
- b. For new groups decide on time and place of next meeting
- c. For existing groups announce time and place of next meeting
- d. Distribute handouts

### 7. Refreshments and socializing \*



**Food is always a good addition to a meeting. If you plan to have food at your event you should advertise that before the meeting!**

# The Meeting is Over... What Now?

## Follow Up!!!

See, we told you this would come up again.

After the meeting follow up or designate someone to follow up with all of the new people to see what they thought, what issues, campaigns, or events they were most interested in. Give them a call, shoot them an email, invite them to coffee or lunch.

Figure out if they want to be more involved, and if so what role they can play?

People are more likely to come back for their 2nd, 3rd, and 4th meetings if they feel personally invested in the work and if they feel that the group relies on them.

Also, make sure that you have sent out minutes from the meeting and action items to everyone who attended the meeting.

## Put on Events

Again, this can be something big or small, but it should happen soon after the first meeting to keep momentum going. Ideas for easy first events:

- Watch a human rights themed movie at your house or in your dorm's common room.
- Have a letter writing party.
- Table in your student union or the cafeteria.
- Host a speaker (talk to your regional office about getting a speakers list).
- Work with your campus events committee to put on a joint event (HINT: sometimes they even have money to contribute to events).
- Start planning for your big annual event.

## Keep Recruiting

Even if you did an amazing job getting a room full of people to your first meeting, there will still be people who couldn't make it or who never even heard about your meeting. Don't let those great potential human rights activists fall through the cracks.

- Call through the list of people who didn't make it to the meeting but signed up to receive more information. Invite them to the next event or meeting
- Keep putting up posters, asking professors and other student groups to send out emails on your behalf, and having sign up sheets at all of your events.
- Look for all opportunities to talk about Amnesty International and to invite everyone to your meetings.

**Expert Tip:**  
Don't forget that what happens after the meeting is just as important as what happens before!

## Resources

- Sample Sign in Sheet for Tabling
- 4 Sample Flyers
- Sample Interest Cards for Class Room Presentations
- 1 Sample Table Tent
- 5 Sample Posters

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***Putting the Human Back in Human Rights***

