

2018 AMNESTY STARTER GUIDE



**Guide for Organizing an Amnesty International
Local Group in Your Community**

**“LOCAL ACTION
WITH GLOBAL
IMPACT.”**

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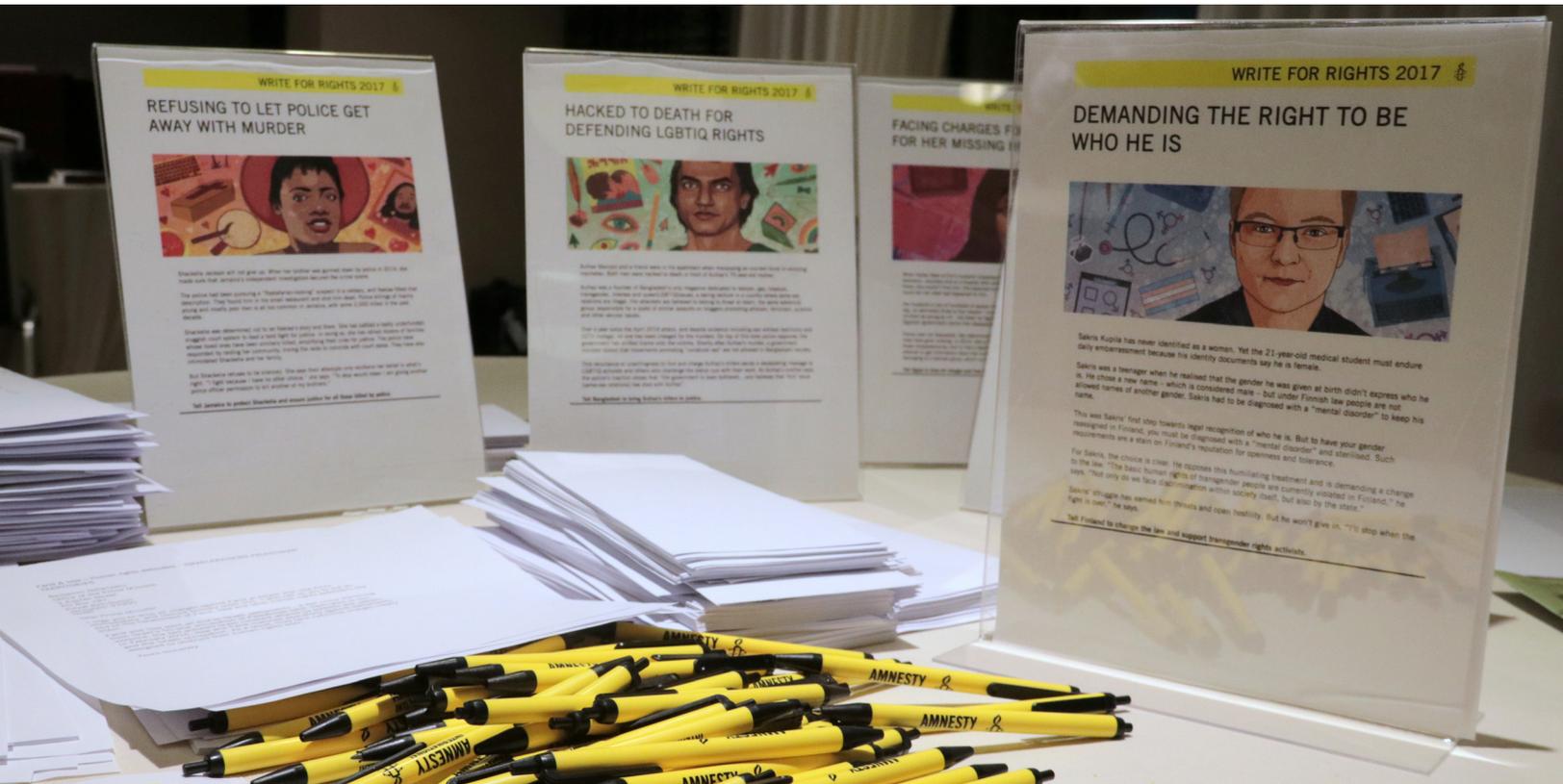
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WELCOME TO THE 2018 AMNESTY STARTER GUIDE!

10 STEPS TO TAKE

1. Secure a meeting space, set a date & time for the first AI meeting
2. Build a core group of 3-5 people
3. Delegate roles within the group
4. Build awareness in your community about your new AI Local Group
5. Connect with AI's state network of activists' leaders
6. Select 2-4 issues to focus on
7. Develop a 6-month activism strategy
8. Build local partnerships
9. Diversify your group and expand your networks
10. Celebrate successes and acknowledge the impact that your group is having!





MEETING SPACE

When selecting a meeting space choose carefully! Think about accessibility and visibility. Identify space that would allow your group to meet monthly at the same time of the month. Consistency helps to build momentum and people will be able to better plan. Finding the right space is key so test out a few places and see where “the vibe” feels right. There are so many unique opportunities to connect social action groups –like Amnesty International Local Groups to community spaces such as shared office spaces where there is often available meeting space and a built-in community of potential new supporters!

ORIENTATION

We encourage your first meeting to serve as an “AI Orientation Meeting.” Take this time to educate people about the work of Amnesty International and share with the group why you want to mobilize around human rights advocacy in your community –invite others to share their thoughts.

MONTHLY GATHERINGS

Review what a typical monthly meeting will consist of and invite people’s input. Remember people come out because they want to do something –they are driven to act! So always have an action that people can take!

CONTACT LIST

Make sure you capture people’s contact information and follow up with a thank you and information for when the next meeting will be!



GROUPS, ROLES & AWARENESS

BUILD A CORE GROUP OF 3-5 PEOPLE

Build a core group of people: Utilize your contacts in advance and let people know about your plans and invite a couple of people to work with you to make this happen!

DELEGATE ROLES WITHIN THE GROUP

Don't try to do it all: Delegate roles and invite people to help out. The key to a successful group is having everyone pitch in whether it is volunteering to write the minutes of the meeting or bring snacks to the next meeting, people want to feel like they are contributing. Below you will find a list of group roles that we usually recommend.

- **Group Coordinator:** Plans the monthly agenda, solicits input, and helps to facilitate at the meetings
- **Group Co-Coordinator:** Provides support to the Group Coordinator, often times sharing the responsibility as lead.
- **Urgent Action Coordinator:** Direct contact to receive monthly Urgent Actions. This person will draft the sample letter and share with the group at the meetings.
- **Communications Coordinator:** Takes notes at the meetings and shares these notes with everyone, including the email list of people who are interested in your group, but may not be able to attend meetings. Helps to build a system for internal communications as well as external communications (social media presence, local media, etc.).
- **Case Commitment Coordinator:** If your group decides to commit to a long-term case this person will be the direct contact to receive all relative information for sharing with the group.

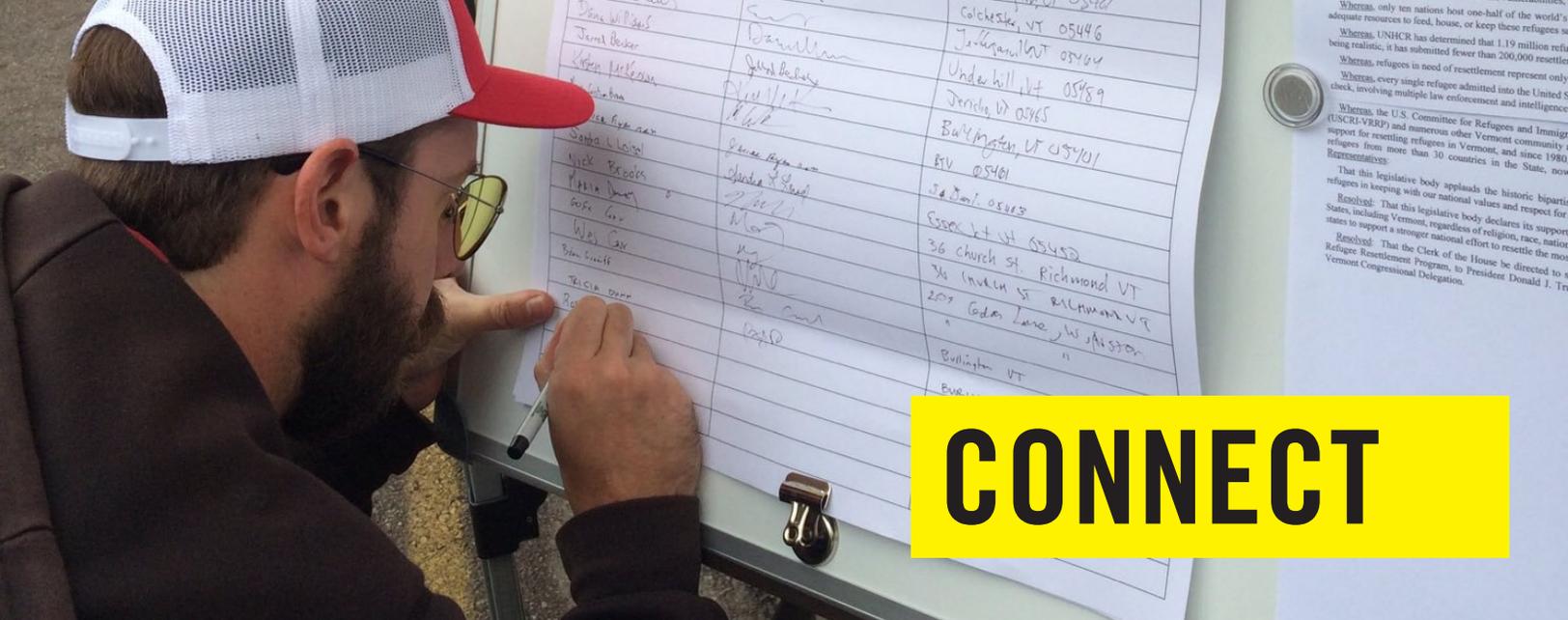


BUILD AWARENESS IN YOUR COMMUNITY ABOUT YOUR NEW AI LOCAL GROUP

Be Visible: Build awareness in your community about your new AI Local Group. Create a flyer and post this around your town/neighborhood (public libraries, coffee shops, pubs, and public bulletin boards). Post your meeting to local online and print media public calendars. Post your meeting on Amnesty USA's website [here](#).

Build a social media presence for your group. There are many different platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter. Social media does extend your outreach and can also be used in so many ways to advance human rights action and draw attention to your group's work. Don't forget to create an Eventbrite for your meetings. **This is free publicity!**





CONNECT WITH AI'S STATE NETWORK OF ACTIVISTS' LEADERS

Connect with AI member leaders: AIUSA has a grassroots web of volunteer leaders who have been recruited and trained to support the work of other activists. These roles include,

AREA COORDINATORS (AC) are responsible for ensuring that local groups have the support and alignment they need to help protect human rights.

STUDENT ACTIVISTS COORDINATORS (SAC) are responsible for ensuring that student groups have the support and alignment they need to help protect human rights.

LEGISLATIVE COORDINATOR (LC) keep current with AI's state and national legislative priority issues. The LC will provide education and training to AI activists throughout the state.

STATE DEATH PENALTY ABOLITION COORDINATORS (SDPAC) work groups at the state level to help abolish the death penalty.

COUNTRY AND THEMATIC SPECIALISTS are volunteers with expertise in specific geographical areas of the world to develop and implement human rights advocacy strategies.

MEMBERSHIP EMPOWERMENT TRAINERS (MET) are experienced AIUSA activist who have been trained to design and deliver workshops and facilitate group discussions. Below are some examples of workshops that MET can provide:

- Amnesty policies and procedures
- Group management skills
- Human Rights Knowledge
- Campaigning Skills

To connect with AI member leaders in your state contact: Fieldorganizing@aiusa.org

SELECT 2-4 ISSUES TO FOCUS ON

Identifying the issues/areas to focus on: At any one time, Amnesty International works on a number of international and domestic human rights issues. Discuss with your group some of the main areas of concern that members may have. Questions to think about when selecting your focus: What are the top issue areas that members of the group seem most interested in working on? What are the issues that your group could have a big impact on given your geographical area?

DEVELOP A 6-MONTH ACTIVISM STRATEGY

Strategize & Plan: Once your group has identified your core issues then develop a 6-month organizing plan for your group. In your plan be sure to identify 2-4 goals (goals can be long-term, intermediate or short-term) with objectives focused on growing your group and advancing human rights advocacy. Make sure your objectives are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound)

BUILD LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

Build Relationships: Connect with likely allies and build alliances in your community. Share information on your group and the focus of your work. Become an ally to other organizations by acknowledging their work and when possible show support. Working in coalition is encouraged when your human rights goals are the same. Identify faith-based groups, businesses, and other community institutions that support the work of AI and connect with them.



DIVERSIFY YOUR GROUP AND EXPAND YOUR NETWORKS

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is vital to the success of any activists group. Be mindful and create an environment that is welcoming and inclusive of others.

Celebrate the small stuff! People need to know that whether it's 5 minutes or 90 minutes a month, their time does make a difference. Acknowledge your group's growing accomplishments, impact, and the stories of sheer gratitude from people who have benefitted from the work of Amnesty International. Remember, it is activists like you that makes this happen!

CELEBRATE SUCCESSES & ACKNOWLEDGE THE IMPACT THAT YOUR GROUP IS HAVING!

Amnesty International is a grassroots organization that embraces a culture of shared leadership: A pillar of AIUSA's success in advancing human rights around the world is the effective partnership between volunteer leaders and staff. Through shared leadership, AIUSA can better tap the talent of all and inspire all to work hard to promote and protect human rights.

