

# ORGANIZING FOR THE WORLD WE WANT



CHANGE  
OUR WORLD



50 YEARS  
**AMNESTY**  
INTERNATIONAL

## STUDENT AREA COORDINATOR HANDBOOK 2011

AMNESTYUSA.ORG





# DARE TO CHANGE

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This handbook has been developed for the sole purpose of training student activists at Amnesty International. It pulls from many different resources and may only be reproduced and distributed for training purposes. To adapt these materials for your own training please contact [ccarrion@aiusa.org](mailto:ccarrion@aiusa.org).



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**“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”**

— Margaret Mead

## WELCOME

Welcome to an exciting year of activism with Amnesty International! On behalf of AIUSA and the National Youth Program, we thank you for all that you do to help Amnesty International impact the fight for human rights. The work of a Student Area Coordinator (SAC) is crucial to our ability to promote and protect human rights here in the US and beyond.

A unique feature of this handbook is the collective human rights organizing wisdom we’ve gathered from across the country and around the world. These pages are filled with innovative, exciting and practical resources and information you’ll need for a successful Amnesty year. We hope this handbook can aid you in your role in working with student groups, member leaders and Amnesty regional and national offices. It contains tips for supporting your student groups, information about campaigns and a host of other tools to make you and your peers the best activists you can be. Read it carefully, ask questions and don’t hesitate to use it as an everyday reference on human rights and Amnesty International.

Each section contains videos, activities and tips for you to become familiar with and to in turn share with other youth leaders and student groups. You will find helpful hints and additional resources on the side bar and bottom of the pages. Always remember that if you need further explanation or more creative ideas feel free to reach out to your field organizer!

A huge shout out to all the current and former SACs that helped make the handbook possible. They have shared helpful activities, thoughtful insights and inspirational quotes for the days ahead as an SAC and a human rights campaigner.

*\*Have other ideas or suggestions to include in the handbook let us know at: [youth@aiusa.org](mailto:youth@aiusa.org). We are always looking to improve.*

### Your Story: What Brings You to Amnesty?

Amnesty is comprised of passionate individuals that care and believe in human rights. Sharing your human rights passion with others is an important part of being an SAC.

#### Why I’m a Member Video

Check-out this video about who is an Amnesty member!



Take a moment to think about what brings you to AI ( and when meeting new student leaders ask them to share their story):

**\*Story:** What in your life brought you here today?

**Challenges:** What keeps you from action? What do you want to learn?

**Hope:** What motivates you to act now? What’s your vision for change and how can we organize that vision together?

**Leadership Qualities:** What skills do you have? How do you lead others already in your life? What would you be willing to bring to this movement?

Practice these questions with your student group leaders, learn why she/he has been called to do this work. Probe with “why?” questions. Listen carefully for:

What values and interests do we share?

What skills and resources do we bring to this work?

When will we meet again to take action and to keep building this relationship?

*\*Originally adapted from the work of Marshall Ganz, Howard University. Modified by the New Organizing Institute.*

*“I’ve met so many amazing people through Amnesty International. The community is vibrant, kind and hard working. I have grown as an organizer, public speaker and writer. In my first few months as an SAC I was facilitating conference sessions at both the regional conferences and the Annual General Meeting. Without this experience. I’m not sure if I would have grown as much as I have.”*

*—Stephanie, Saint Joseph’s University, Pennsylvania*

*“My childhood experiences with the legal and foster care systems prompted my interest in human and civil rights. I learned firsthand how easy and commonplace it is for such rights to be curtailed or ignored, and I’ve known ever since that I want to do whatever I can to bring awareness to and change that unfortunate fact.”*

*— Frankee, Linganore High School, Maryland*







## The Big Picture: Our Global Movement

Amnesty International (AI) is a Nobel Peace Prize-winning grassroots activist organization with 3 million supporters, activists and volunteers in more than 150 countries campaigning for human rights worldwide. The organization investigates and exposes abuses, educates and mobilizes the public, and works to protect people wherever justice, freedom, truth and dignity are denied.

### International

- International Secretariat (IS): the international headquarters of Amnesty International, which coordinates the efforts of the international movement and is home to our global research program
- Headquarters are based in London, UK where teams of human rights specialists keep tabs on worldwide human rights conditions, publish regular reports, advise on national and international policies that affect human rights, and issue actions
- Secretary General (SG), Salil Shetty leads the IS. You can follow his tweets [@salilshetty](#)
- International Council Meeting (ICM): The ICM, is the supreme governing body of AI and meets every two years, bringing members from all over the world. Each AI section is asked to bring a youth member to these meetings.

### National

- AIUSA's specialized programs work with researchers at the IS and with AIUSA membership and Field Offices to coordinate our human rights campaigning.
- AIUSA headquarters are located in New York City with additional offices in Washington D.C., Atlanta, Chicago, Boston and San Francisco.
- Annual General Meeting (AGM): Every year AIUSA members come together to learn, discuss and vote on AIUSA's human rights work. Every member has a vote and so do student groups!

### Regional

- Local and Student Groups are the primary representatives of AI USA in their communities and form the backbone of the organization. Our groups are supported by Area Coordinators and Student Area Coordinators (YOU!)
- Our 5 Regional Offices (Mid-Atlantic, Midwest, Northeast, South, West) offer regional and state-based support to activists. Every Fall each region hosts of Regional Conference for members.
- Member Leaders: In addition to SACs and ACs, AIUSA has many member leaders, See page 8.

*“Better to Light a Candle than to Curse the Darkness”  
- an ancient Chinese proverb*



## Lessons From the Field

*“I got involved in Amnesty through a friend who was also the coordinator of the student led Amnesty group at our school. I attended several Amnesty meeting upon my friend’s insistence and I really loved how I could just sit at my desk, pick up a pen and paper and ensure that people are treated fairly.”*

*– Sanjana, Temple High School, Texas*

# SAC JOURNEY

**“All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence.”**  
- Martin Luther King, Jr.

By being a SAC, you can further develop leadership skills, grow and strengthen AI groups, organize effective activities that will promote awareness and advocacy for AI’s focal human rights campaigns. Participants will also gain greater confidence and self-awareness and develop a long-term commitment to the human rights movement, whether this becomes an important volunteer or career path.

## SAC Job Description

The Student Area Coordinator is an experienced Amnesty International volunteer who represents the organization in an assigned area by serving as an advisor to student groups and liaison between student activists, AI member groups, Regional offices, and other AI staff. The SAC supports and enables student and member activism by coordinating and promoting area-wide initiatives, recruiting members, organizing meetings, locating resources and encouraging creative activism. A SAC typically commits for two years and works under the guidance and supervision of the Regional Office staff, including a Field Organizer.

## Important Tasks for an SAC

### Leadership for Human Rights

- Stay educated on AI, its issues, campaigns, and current events
- Actively participate in area, state, regional meetings and conferences
- Keep groups and activists informed and engaged with most current issues, as well as AI goals and objectives
- Reach out to your Regional Office frequently (questions on campaigns or student group issues are welcomed)

### Strengthen and Support Student Groups

- Getting to know local student and member groups and staying up-to-date with their activism through frequent contact
- Acting as liaison between Regional Office staff to inform AI activists of new campaigns or upcoming actions
- Supporting groups in pursuing AI’s mission, recruiting members, fundraising, and campaigning for AI issues
- Informing your Regional Office of successful human rights organizing among groups, as well as advising them of any problems you or your groups may face

### Maximize Campaign Impact

- Identifying areas for possible new groups, and collaborating with Regional Office to build new chapters
- Organizing special events like rally, tabling, concerts, lobbying, fundraiser, etc.
- Organizing area meetings, conferences, or trainings

### Other Region Specific Duties:

Each region may have other specific tasks for SACs to perform or roles for SACs to fulfill, including participation in regional and area planning and personal and regional goal setting. Meet with your Field Organizer to fill this section (feel free to make recommendations on what you would like to focus on as well):

- [Sample: A Weekly Report from SAC in Rhode Island](#)
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Quick tip to stay up to date with AIUSA**

- Like our [Facebook page](#)
- Read our blog [“Human Rights Now”](#) and visit the Amnesty International USA [website](#) frequently

*Human rights activism is important because we have a civic responsibility to defend human rights under the threat of tyranny and injustice. Generally, people who know their rights and have the support to defend those rights are more receptive to the idea of defending those rights for themselves and other people*  
– Luka, Stephen F. Austin State University, Texas



## Top 10 Things A SAC Should Know

**1 Work With Your Field Organizer!** Whether it's a question about the facts of a campaign, or problems with student groups, your Field Organizer is an invaluable resource to connect you to the answers or materials you may need. Get to know her/him well!

**2 Contacting Student Groups** This can often be the SACs greatest challenge. The first time you get in touch with your student groups, be sure to confirm the contact information of the Group Coordinator and a secondary contact, if possible. Also, try to establish a regular contact time (i.e. the third Thursday of every month).

When sending e-mails, keep them **brief!** Try **creative** ways of reaching out: create a Facebook group for Group Coordinators in your area or send a quick text to check in and set up a phone call. Refer to the [SAC Contacts Worksheet](#) to keep a record of contacts with your groups!

**3 Addressing Controversial Issues** Many of AI campaigns deal with controversial, topical and sensitive issues like 9/11 or the death penalty. Working with a diverse student group, SACs should aim to develop reasoned opinion accepting a wide range of views and values, but still within a framework of AI's held values of rights and justice.

*"It's always helpful to (1) keep the discussion rooted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, because this gives AI's positions legal legitimacy, and (2) try to work the issue from a variety of approaches. For example, we oppose the death penalty because it is irreversible, expensive, vulnerable to racism and other forms of prejudice, subject to human error, etc. Each of these reasons may resonate more than others for particular individuals".*

-Ashley, Grand Valley State University, Michigan

**4 Don't Stray from the UDHR** Student groups may sometimes have interests that lay outside the realm of AI campaigns. Their enthusiasm is great—but remind them that when using the name of Amnesty International, all actions must reflect AI's mission and agenda. If you are unsure about a group's idea, review Amnesty's policies, check out the Campaigns section of AIUSA's website, or consult with your Field Organizer. Try, if possible, to modify their idea, or change their approach, to make it fit with the AI mission. "Don't stray too far from the UDHR!" is a good phrase to remember.

**5 Committed to Respect and Diversity**  
**Respect:** Human rights work, first and foremost is about treating all people with dignity, as stated in the UDHR: *"All people are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act toward one another in a spirit of brotherhood."* The people we fight for could very well have been us, if circumstances were different. Our role is not to tell them what's right for them, but to seek only their freedom to live in dignity and peace.

**Diversity:** A membership that welcomes people of diverse communities, approaches and ideas is the key to the sustainability of AI and the broader human rights movement. To understand what diversity means to Amnesty International and your own group, check out our [Multiculturalism Packet](#).

**6 Fundraising** is an absolutely essential component of human rights work—and may be an important task for your student groups. Funds raised in the name of AI are to be used either to support the activities of a student group, or to be donated to AIUSA. For fundraiser ideas, sell [Amnesty merchandise](#), or visit sell fair trade products through [Equal Exchange](#) (be sure to mention Amnesty's name!) More tips in the Appendix.

**7 Reimbursements and Grants** Each of AIUSA's five Regional Offices may have its own procedures for reimbursing volunteers. Make sure you and your groups know these procedures! Expenditures over \$50 need prior clearance from your Regional office. Be sure to save ALL original receipts!! If you are unsure if AI will authorize an expense, check with your Field Organizer! If you are planning a large event or project, you may be able to receive funds through AIUSA's Special Initiatives Fund.

**8 The AIUSA Website** can be your go-to source for stay informed on AI news and campaigns. Check up regularly on:

- [The AIUSA Blog](#) and [Website](#) for daily updates on human rights issues and current events
- The [Campaigns](#) page for info on all AI campaigns and links to online petitions and other resources
- The [Youth](#) page for Student Group Registration and other information for student activists
- AIUSA's [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)

**9 Working with Social Media** Be it Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn, social media has become increasingly important in shaping public thinking and increasing visibility. At AI, we use social media to **educate** the public, **engage** and **mobilize** members, as well as **recruit** new activists. For helpful tips, refer to the AIUSA's [social media strategy](#). Encourage student groups to create their own website, such as [UCLA's](#) great example

**10 Getting More Involved** Beyond the SAC role, there are many other opportunities for further involvement in the AI activist community. Check out the [Planning for the Future section](#) for more details!



## Your Network: Regional Offices

As a SAC, you are an integral part of the AIUSA network, linking local and student activists to the Amnesty staff and lead volunteers, regional offices, and the worldwide movement!

Amnesty International USA (AIUSA) regional offices are primarily responsible for recruiting and organizing dues-paying members and activists across their region to educate the public and take action on AIUSA's human rights campaigns. Regional offices work closely with SACs, other member leaders, student and local groups, and organizational partners to achieve human rights victories in the region, the

nation, and the world. Regional Office staff consists of a Regional Director, Office Administrator, and 2-3 Field Organizers. Each year, the regional office and a team of member leaders plan a Regional Conference where existing and new Amnesty activists come together to learn about human rights issues, develop or improve advocacy skills, and network with other activists. SACs are encouraged to attend the regional conference and bring members of their AI student groups. Whenever possible, regional offices also organize annual leadership trainings specifically for state-based member leaders.

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## Lessons From the Field

*Field Organizers are there to work with you/guide you, not to babysit you. This means that you will have to actively seek out tasks/projects as you see fit. If you have a great idea, run it by your FO to pool resources together and see if you can turn your idea into reality!"*

- Stacy, UC Berkeley, California



### Stay Connected with your regional office:

- Visit the events page: [www.amnestyusa.org/events](http://www.amnestyusa.org/events)
- Save your FO's and regional office numbers in your phone
- Add your regional office as a Facebook friend







## Your Network: Student Groups

AIUSA's vibrant student groups undertake a wide range of activities—from public demonstrations and letter-writing campaigns to educational projects to face-to-face meetings with government representatives—to prevent human rights abuses. They also work to grow the organization through recruiting new national and local members. Student members are also welcomed into Amnesty International's most important decision-making processes, including those at AIUSA's [Annual General Meeting](#) (AGM) where policy is made.

### Registration:

Each year AIUSA asks that all student groups register their group to maintain their active status and receive special Amnesty resources like **CORE Action** and special rates for our regional and annual conference. It is essential that all groups register so that they can have a vote at our AGM and Regional Conferences.

Groups can reregister at: [www.amnestyusa.org/sglogin](http://www.amnestyusa.org/sglogin)

They will need a username and password. If they don't have this information, they can contact the regional office.

### Reach Out and Stay Connected:

Whether new or well-established, student groups can amplify the impact of their activism with support and connection with an SAC. Before the year begins, ask your FO for a contact sheet of all your student groups, and introduce yourself to all the Group Coordinators. Verify their con-

tact information and try to set up a regular time to check in. If getting in touch is difficult, try a variety of tactics – from e-mails to Facebook to in-person visits to their schools. Fill your student groups in on new or upcoming AI campaigns or actions, events such as Regional Conferences or the AGM, or encourage them to take part in the [Human Rights Ambassador Challenge](#). Be sure, additionally, to get photos and stories from their actions to share with your Regional Office!

### Additional Resources:

- [The Do's and Don't's of Student Group Activism Handout](#)
- Use the [SAC Contacts Workbook](#) to keep a record of your network, their contact info, and your correspondence with them.
- For more information, see the Organizing for Human Rights Change section!

### Quick Facts: Student Groups

- AIUSA has nearly 1,000 student chapters on both high school and college campuses all over the country. Make sure your group is registered!
- students and young people form the majority of Amnesty International's activist corps!
- During AIUSA's National Week of Student Action, student activists join together to focus on a specific pressing human rights issue.
- Students account for about half of Annual General Meeting participants.

*"My tip is to try to meet with the coordinators of the groups in your area in person as often as possible. If you know each other on a personal level or can even just place faces with names, working together will be so much easier."*

*– Jordana, Pittsburgh Creative and Performing Arts High School, Pennsylvania*

## Registration Made Easy

1. **Login:** [www.amnestyusa.org/sglogin](http://www.amnestyusa.org/sglogin)
2. **Update:** Click "Edit My Student Group Profile" on the left hand side of the page and include new contact information
3. **Write It Out:** Make sure student groups enter the exact name of their school (no abbreviations), mailing address and names of coordinators
4. **Manage Your Group:** Use this tab to update information about you, your members and faculty advisor. These details can be edited at any time during the school year.

If you or your student group has questions contact your regional office.

*"Really focus on making individual connections. Try to meet as many group coordinators in person as possible, and do not underestimate a telephone call. When your students can put your face or voice to your name, they are much more likely to communicate with you regularly."*

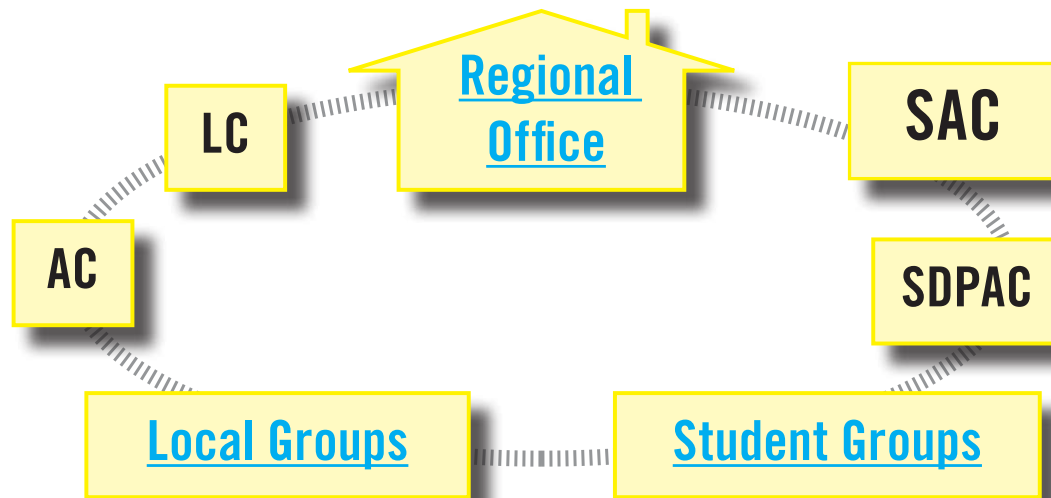
*– Ashley, Grand Valley State University, Michigan*



## Your Network: Member Leaders

Since the early days of Amnesty International, local groups have been the mainstay of our activism and the backbone of the organization. Local groups are community-based. They bring together people of different backgrounds, including teachers, professionals, retirees, students and many others to work as a team for the promotion of human rights.

SACs work on a team with additional regional or state-based volunteer member leaders. These volunteers are invaluable resources to SACs and the groups they support:



- **Area Coordinators** (ACs) are the counterpart to the SAC, working with local groups in a similar capacity. Like SACs, they work with their Field Organizer and Regional office, as well as local volunteer leadership to support volunteers' work.
- **Legislative Coordinators** (LCs) work with Amnesty's professional legislative advocates in Washington DC, other volunteers, and staff to achieve AIUSA's legislative goals. They can provide information, advice, and training on working with Members of Congress. They can help you coordinate your group's legislative agenda and work with other groups in your congressional district.
- **State Death Penalty Abolition Coordinators** (SDPACs) work with other members and staff to achieve specific legislative goals re-

lated to the death penalty. They support groups in their state and provide groups with information, advice and training regarding the death penalty.

- **Country Specialists** serve as the section's primary experts and strategists on particular countries, covering every country except the US. They may also be able to advise on the appropriateness of speakers from a particular country, or speak themselves.
- **National Youth Action Committee** (NYAC) represents the voice of youth members by 1) providing mentorship and support for Student Area / Activist Coordinators (SACs) and other youth leaders 2) connecting youth to human rights activism and 3) organizing increased youth participation in AIUSA.



## Lessons From the Field

*I wish I had known more about AI **campaign-country specialists**. Our chapter worked for a semester on a local issue and later found out after the campaign that there was an AI specialist in our state not too far from our chapter who could have given us a tremendous amount of resources and knowledge.*

— Luka, Stephen F. Austin State University, Texas





## Notes From a SAC

Hello,

A few words of advice. The SAC should always keep in mind the specific needs and character of the state for which she is working, but it is equally important to keep in mind that we are part of a global movement and what happens in one corner of the world affects us all. Therefore, don't worry about tailoring your goals or priorities to specific regions. Oklahoma or South Dakota chapters of Amnesty don't just have to work on indigenous rights issues. Wisconsin chapters can work on issues besides collective bargaining. Ideally, those Wisconsin chapters would be as committed to indigenous rights issues as the Oklahomans, and vice versa!

Figuring out how to strike a balance between being active in one's home state and committed to the broader mission of Amnesty can be a real challenge. One way to start is to approach issues through a cosmopolitan lens, while still shining a light on your home turf. We don't have rights because we live in Chicago or Illinois or even America, we have rights because we are human beings. At this same time, it is incredibly important to know your own state. Only by knowing it inside and out will you be in a position to take full advantage of its distinct resources. Amnesty chapters in rural colleges or high schools may not have the access to international institutions that New York City chapters have. Groups in Illinois outside of Chicago cannot drive down to the Midwest of peace and shoot the breeze. On the other hand, these groups might have more access to human rights issues facing heartland America than urban groups. States and regions do not all have the same resources, but they all have some unique, untapped potential: the trick is knowing where to look.

Bear all of this in mind as a SAC. Also, be aware that a state is larger than its key cities and university campuses. There's a world of potential activists in Illinois outside of Chicago. There are plenty of people in Texas who care about human rights who don't live near UT-Austin. To keep in mind that you represent a whole state, not just a piece of it, can be difficult work. Seek out student groups on campuses and in high schools that are off the beaten trail. A group may never have heard of Amnesty and yet may turn out to be working on human rights issues already. If you see a "Global Justice Society" on the website of a college you've never heard of in a part of the state you rarely visit, drop them an email. Let them know you're out there, what work you do, and how you can help.

Every state is full of people who care about other people, and that's what it takes to be a human rights activist. Don't be afraid to look in unusual places for Amnesty supporters—you may just stumble upon the next Peter Benenson.

Good Luck!

*Joshua Leach*

Title: Student Area Coordinator for Illinois  
School: University of Chicago, class of 2012



Josh Leach is a senior at the University of Chicago studying modern European history. He has been an active member of Amnesty International since high school, and joined the organization as SAC for Illinois after interning at the Amnesty Midwest Office and co-chairing the UChicago Amnesty chapter. His interest in human rights extends from writing and researching to journalism and international law. He is passionate about combating poverty at home and gender inequality overseas. He loves books, trivia competitions, and dogs.





## OUR FOUNDATION

### The Universal Declaration of Human Rights



1. Right to Equality
2. Freedom from Discrimination
3. Right to Life, Liberty, Personal Security
4. Freedom from Slavery
5. Freedom from Torture and Degrading Treatment
6. Right to Recognition as a Person before the Law
7. Right to Equality before the Law
8. Right to Remedy by Competent Tribunal
9. Freedom from Arbitrary Arrest and Exile
10. Right to Fair Public Hearing
11. Right to be Considered Innocent until Proven Guilty
12. Freedom from Interference with Privacy, Family, Home and Correspondence
13. Right to Free Movement in and out of the Country
14. Right to Asylum in other Countries from Persecution
15. Right to a nationality and Freedom to Change Nationality
16. Right to Marriage and Family
17. Right to Own Property
18. Freedom of Belief and Religion
19. Freedom of Opinion and Information
20. Right of Peaceful Assembly and Association
21. Right to Participate in Government and Free Elections
22. Right to Social Security
23. Right to Desirable Work and Join Trade Unions
24. Right to Rest and Leisure
25. Right to Adequate Living Standard
26. Right to Education
27. Right to Participate in the Cultural Life of the Community
28. Right to a Social Order that Articulates this Document
29. Community Duties Essential to Free and Full Development
30. Freedom from State or Personal Interference in the above Rights

## Promoting Human Rights

*“Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.”*

*- Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

Created in 1948 by the United National General Assembly, the UDHR is one of the most fundamental and important documents shaping international human rights law and basic human rights standards around the world. It is at the core of all of Amnesty International’s work. The 30 articles of the UDHR establish the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of all people.

These rights are:

- **universal** –they apply to absolutely everyone
- **inalienable** –they cannot be taken away
- **indivisible** – no right is “less important” than the other

Additional Resources:

- See our [Human Rights Activity Guide](#) for fun exercises to share with student groups or presentations and learn more about Human Rights and the UDHR.

## Videos to watch and share!

The UDHR in 30 Words video



Amnesty International is a global movement of people fighting injustice and promoting human rights.

## Vision

Our vision is of a world in which every person – regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation or gender identity – enjoys all of the human rights enshrined in the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) (UDHR) and other internationally recognized human rights standards.

## Mission

We work to protect people wherever justice, freedom, truth and dignity are denied. We investigate and expose abuses, educate and mobilize the public, and help transform societies to create a safer, more just world.

As an SAC, you will have the opportunity to represent AI and share its work with your friends, family and community members!

## Our Story

Download the [AI Basics PowerPoint presentation](#) to introduce a new group of students or volunteers to Amnesty's work—or share with student groups to use on their own. Refer to the presentation notes for tips and further information. Make sure to adapt and personalize the slides; add photos, videos, and information specific to your objective, and make it interactive! Be well-informed about AI, allow time for discussion and questions from the audience, and take advantage of the opportunity to grow the movement!

### How to tell the AI story:

- Amnesty International is the world's largest grassroots human rights organization, with over 3 million members, supporters and campaigners in 150 countries
- In 1977 AI was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for having “contributed to securing ground for freedom, for justice, and thereby for peace in the world.”

- AI's most well-known issue is to free “prisoners of conscience”: since its founding in 1961, AI has helped to release more than 40,000 prisoners of conscience.
- Today we continue to stand for prisoners of conscience, but also prisoners of violence, and prisoners of poverty.
- Through research, media outreach, and public awareness-raising, AI shines a light on human rights violations; through grassroots organizing tactics, it creates international pressure to stop them
- AI accepts no money from governments, and operates primarily based on the donations and support of its members
- AI is independent from all governments and political ideologies, and all economic and religious interests
- AI stands with people in every country who are on the front lines of the fight to end discrimination, repression, torture, abductions and killings.
- Every day, people turn to AI to protect their human rights. And for 50 years, AI has been there!

## Shine a Light on 50 Years!

In 1960, two students in Portugal were sentenced to seven years in jail for raising their glasses in a toast to freedom. Outraged, British lawyer [Peter Benenson](#) published an article in the London Observer, demanding the release of “prisoners of conscience” around the world. This article, published May 28, 1961, triggered an international response of letter-writing campaigns, marking the beginning of Amnesty International and a growing movement for human rights.

2011 marks AI's [50th Anniversary](#) and promoters of human rights are celebrating with “Toasts to Freedom” across the world! To see more pictures, check out our [Flickr](#).

[amnestyusa.org/AI50](http://amnestyusa.org/AI50)



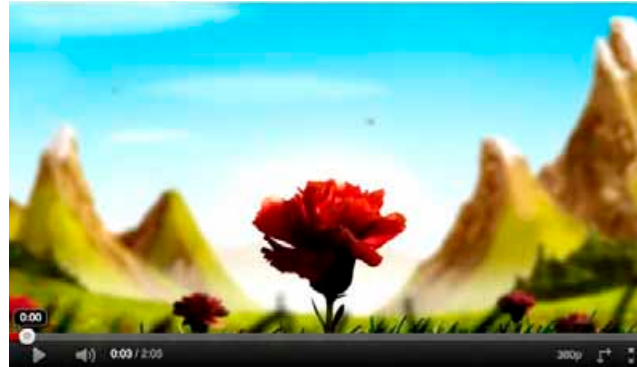


### Videos to watch and share!

50 Years - Amnesty International video



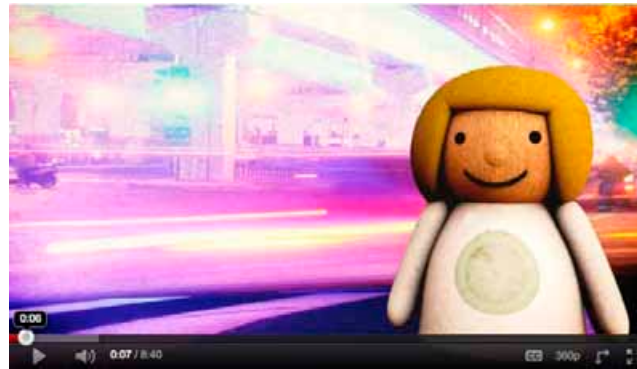
Standing up for Freedom Video



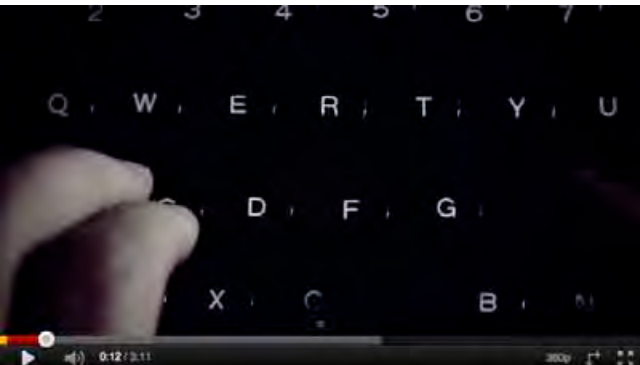
U2 Toasts Amnesty Video



Human Rights Animated Video



Shine a Light on Human Rights Video



Introduction to Human Rights Video



### KEY VICTORY: Aung San Suu Kyi

On November 15, 2010, Aung San Suu Kyi, Nobel Laureate, leading pro-democracy activist in Myanmar (Burma), and Amnesty International priority case, was released after over seven years of house arrest. For years, AI activists around the globe held rallies and wrote letters to governments, policymakers and activists, asserting their solidarity with her movement and calling for her release. Thousands of letters, petitions and phone calls later, Suu Kyi was released, to continue her work of promoting democracy and defending human rights.

Suu Kyi has spent over two decades peacefully advocating for democracy in Myanmar, but has faced two periods of house arrest, restricted movement, and risks to her personal safety. Members of her political party, the National League for Democracy (NLD) have been attacked or remain in jail. Burmese officials offered freedom to Suu Kyi with the condition of her withdrawal from politics, yet she has always refused, remaining committed to leading her people in the fight for democracy.

[Check out an example of the AI actions to free Suu Kyi!](#)

“I have always been interested in anything that I feel is right. But this is my passion, to stand up for what is right. It is important because if we want to bring justice to anything, we have to start from somewhere.”  
- Khairunisa Malisa, University of the Ozarks, Arkansas

## Working on AI campaigns

Amnesty International campaigns on behalf of individuals at risk, putting a face to the systematic injustice, while also working to change policies that impact countless lives. We develop campaigns on issues and cases from around the world where we come to make a difference. To have the most impact, AI sections around the world are assigned 'priority campaigns' and mobilize members around these key issues. To harness the energy of student activists we encourage that they identify issues and campaigns they are passionate about - but encourage them not to stray too far from the UDHR!

### CURRENT CAMPAIGNS

**Individuals at Risk:** campaigns to free prisoners of conscience, protect human rights defenders and others at risk. In countries around the world, people's lives are threatened because of who they are or what they believe.

**Demand Dignity:** Fight poverty with human rights. Around the world, thousands of people die every day from hunger and disease. The Demand Dignity Campaign works against the human rights abuses.

**Security with Human Rights:** Take action to end terror and torture. The word rightly makes you shudder. Around the world from Sri Lanka to the USA, the cycle of violence states and armed groups is a global human rights crisis.

**Death Penalty Abolition:** campaigning for a world without the death penalty. Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all circumstances as the ultimate affront to human right, violating the right to life and the right to be free from cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment.

**Crisis Prevention and Response:** Mobilizing for human rights emergencies. The campaign focuses on urgent human rights crises around the world and mobilizes activists to take action.

## Human Rights Ambassador Challenge



### [The Human Rights Ambassador Challenge](#)

challenges AI youth and student activists to make their human rights work bigger and bolder than ever!

On March 17, 2011 during AIUSA'S Destination: Change Our World Youth Summit youth activists from across the country united their voices, creativity, and talents for human rights.

Together, they pledged the following:

*"I pledge as a Human Rights Ambassador to fight for human rights now and to continue that fight until we have reached our destination: CHANGING THE WORLD. I will do so through the talents and abilities that I possess."*

Each month of the HRAC highlights an AI campaign and issue. See the HRAC Calendar, and join the monthly Webinars to learn more.

September: [Immigrants Rights are Human Rights](#)

October: [We Can Live Without the Death Penalty](#)

November: [Regional Power](#)

December: [Write for Rights](#)

### SHARE YOUR STORIES!

Send photos, stories, and results of your HRAC actions to [youth@aiusa.org](mailto:youth@aiusa.org) for recognition, the chance to be featured on the AIUSA website, and to win prizes!

### Additional Resources:

- Download the [AI50 HRAC Calendar for 2011](#) to see how to take action!
- Download the [HRAC Pledge Card](#) now to take the challenge! Distribute these to your student groups that haven't done so yet!



*Albany High activists encourage their peers to write Mother's Day Cards to legislators urging for greater attention to maternal health!*

## SEEDS OF CHANGE

### [HRAC Action in Albany, CA](#)

From maternal health to prisoners of conscience, co-presidents Audrey Irvine-Broque and Celia Greene have led their chapter in bringing Amnesty issues close to home in Northern California. In May, they organized a booth at the Albany Arts & Green Festival which creatively combined maternal health issues with Mother's Day and a "green theme." Children and families created Mother's Day Cards, learned about maternal mortality, wrote letters to policy makers, and in exchange were given seeds. Rightly called "Seeds of Change," it brought awareness to their community and inspired action!

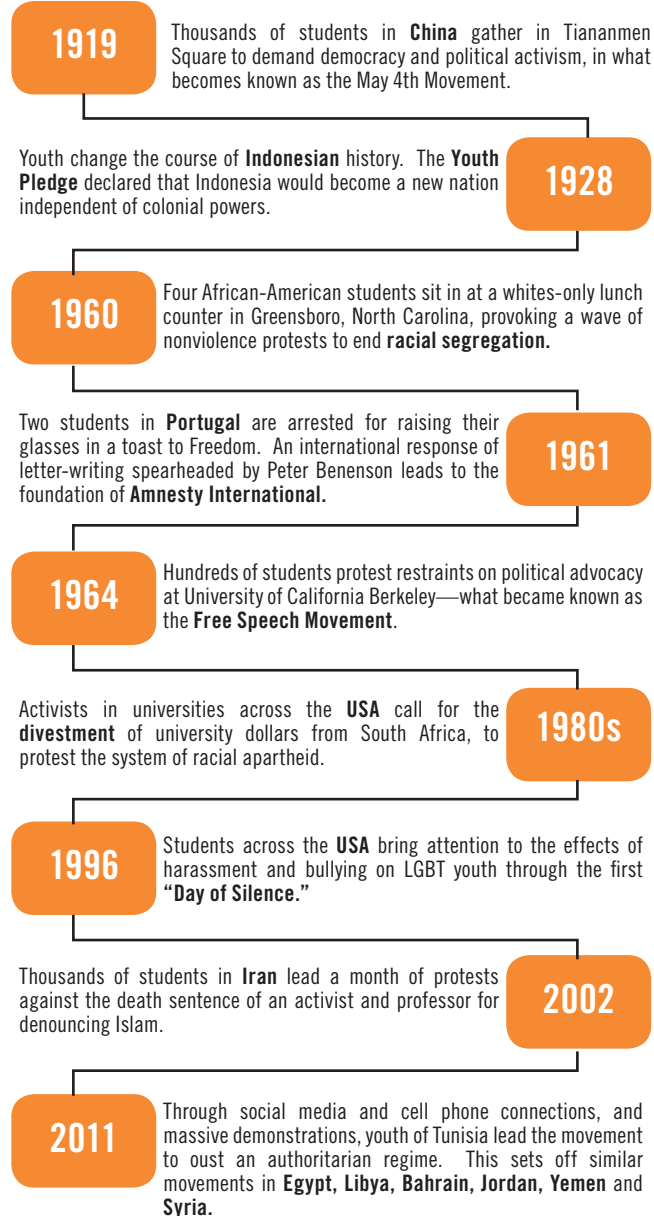
By using a creative and fun way to take action, Albany High activists were able to bring a serious issue to their community's attention. "Maternal mortality is not an issue that is on the forefront of people's minds like say, Guantanamo," said President Audrey, "and so exposing people to the issues we face, especially in the United States, was a main goal."

Explore with your student groups the issues they are interested in, then you can recommend a campaign that is reflective of these interests. If students want to work on issues outside of the priority campaigns, contact the FO in your region to discuss some options.



# ORGANIZING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS CHANGE

## The Movement: A History of Student Activism



“They say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself.”

- Andy Warhol

**AI UK:**

Participated in the ‘sunflower action’ to call for justice for murdered Guatemalan student Claudina Velásquez. In total 566 signed ‘petals’ were received from members of youth and local groups which called on the Guatemalan government to ensure that a fair and proper investigation of Claudina’s murder was carried out.

**Make Your Mark:**

What will you do in 2011 – 2012

Check out: [198 Methods of Nonviolent Protest and Persuasion.](#)

### Videos to watch and share!

What Word Describes Amnesty International?



“I first became aware of human rights violations that occur every day after reading a book assigned to me in my 10th grade English class, **Escape from Slavery**. I was completely shocked that slavery still existed in this day and age. I knew that I had to do something, so the following year I became President of a club at my school that raised awareness about human rights violations and the first event that we put on was about the human rights violations in Sudan. We screened the documentary **Darfur Diaries** and held a panel discussion. I have been involved in human rights work at some level since then.”

– Purvi, University of Virginia, Virginia



“I became a human rights activist as an international student because I understood the significant role the U.S. plays in the defense, protection and promotion of human rights across the world and I figured because I couldn’t legally vote in the U.S. as an international student, I would devote time to political activism during my stay here.”

– Luka, Stephen F. Austin State University, Texas

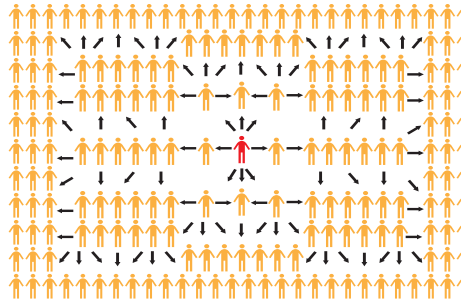
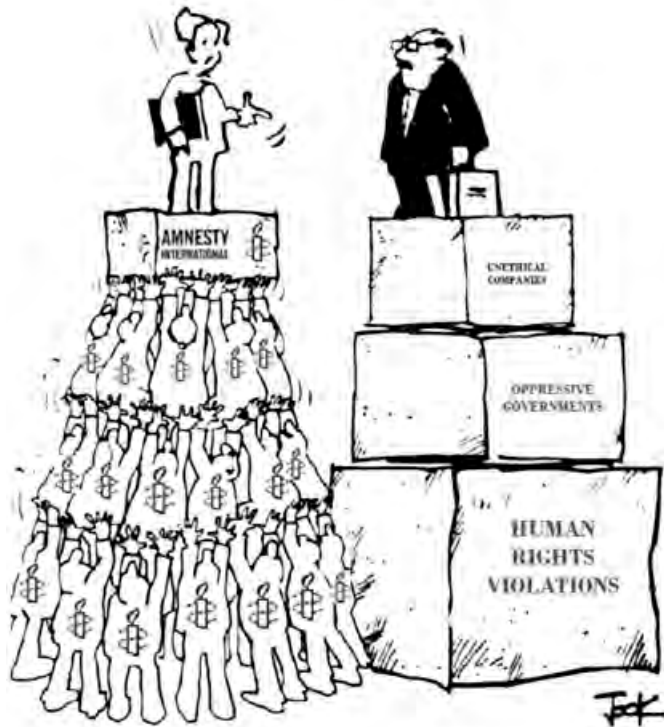


## Collective Action

“If you think you are too small to be effective, you have never been in bed with a mosquito.”

- Betty Reese

With over 3 million members worldwide, the collective voice of the movement is our most powerful asset and why Amnesty International has been so effective in defending human rights globally. Our activists on the ground, supported through a network of experienced staff in the areas of lobbying, research and campaigning, make Amnesty International an unstoppable force in the fight for human rights.



As a SAC you will coordinate students, making them aware of their individual and joint power to effect real change. To do this, you must organize.

### \*ORGANIZING IS:

Identifying **leaders** and coordinating them in leadership teams, Building **community** and commitment around that leadership, Building **power** from the resources of that community, Using that power strategically to make concrete **change** in the world.

### WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

“Leaders are those who take responsibility for enabling others to achieve shared purpose in the face of uncertainty”

In order to launch a new campaign, or strengthen an existing one, your job as an organizer is to identify and recruit others to work with you to build a campaign powerful enough to win change.

*\*Originally adopted from the work of Marshall Ganz, Harvard University. Modified by the New Organizing Institute.*

[TEDx] Rebecca Kantar talks about youth leadership



“I tried yelling at my computer and TV screen every time I heard of someone or some country oppressing its people. I wanted to keep yelling but in a way that would effect change. Amnesty International was the perfect way for me to do that. It’s important because all our humanities are bound together”.

– Keshema, Montgomery College, Maryland



“If I hadn’t been involved with Amnesty as a volunteer leader, I would have had to sit back and watch events unfold in Egypt and Iran and Syria without being able to lend my voice. There are few feelings as great or as rewarding as getting a chance to see how much people are willing to give for the sake of others, for the sake of people they’ve never met who live half-way around the world. That I get to be part of the work these people do and engage with them in a leadership role is a blessing.”

– Joshua, University of Chicago, Illinois





## Leadership That Develops Leaders

**“If you have come here to help me you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine then let us work together”**

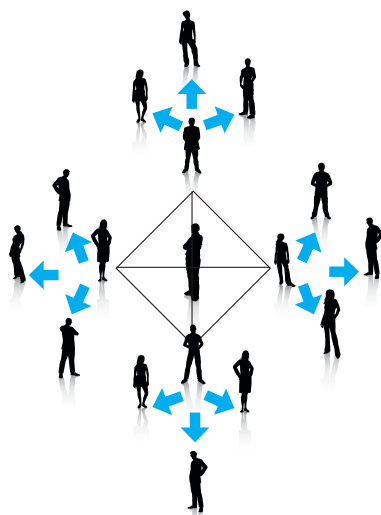
- Aboriginal Activists

Most importantly as a SAC you should get connected with your student leaders. It's perfectly easy to run an Amnesty chapter without realizing the office has your contact info or that there is such a thing as a Student Area Coordinator. So make yourself available as SAC and view every interaction as an opportunity to deepen the relationship, learn about the group, and develop yourself and the student coordinators leadership skills. Be interested in what each group has to offer; listening to and validating the ideas and challenges of other leaders can often be the most effective way to be a leader yourself.

### The “snowflake” approach:

Our Power comes from the relationships with people. “The unique role of organizing is to enable the people who need or want change to be the authors of the change.”

- Marshall Ganz, Harvard University.



Organizing is not only a commitment to identify more leaders but a commitment to engage those leaders in a particular type of action. Organizing power begins with the choice and commitment made by the first person who wants to make something happen. Without this commitment, there are no resources with which to begin. Commitment is only observable through action. The work of organizers begins with their acceptance of their responsibility to challenge others to join them in action.

Build actual relationships with student leaders. Let them feel like they know you personally and that they are highly valued members of the Amnesty team whose opinion counts. Pretty soon, responding to your emails and keeping you apprised of their activities won't seem like a chore to them—it will seem like communicating with a friend and colleague.

### Additional Resources:

- [Assessment Model For Community Engagement](#): Use this form to assess each specific group based on five categories with individual scores, which will then be added up into a composite score gauging suggested level of engagement with external communities.
- [Community Assessment Form](#): Use this chart to map out your resources, keep track of people, place and things in your community.
- [Student Profile Worksheet and Assessment Form](#): This form is a tool for both SACs and student leaders to rate your group's competency and monitor your organization and campaigns.

### Get to know your student activists...

**FIND OUT** who are the students you will be working with and **WHAT** their interests, roles, responsibilities, and strengths.

**IDENTIFY** student leaders and their potential. You don't do everything for your student groups - delegate tasks to capable members. It is never too early to start grooming a new SAC!

**SUPPORT** student leaders to find out who are the key people in their community and at the school they should know and interact with.

*“Contact with student groups can be challenging to frustrating: try sending a hardcopy mailing introducing yourself as their SAC, what you're here to do, how you can be reached, etc. I suggest creating postcards; they're inexpensive, easy to create and order online, fun and effective”*

- Aquib, Townsend Harris High School, NY



*“From an early age I've always been interested in social injustices that I hear about going on around the world. I realized that I need to take action to feel fulfilled. If everyone doesn't take action against what they feel is important than we can't complain about the horrible circumstances we have to deal with.”*

- Leila, Georgia State University, GA

## Maximizing Your Campaign Impact

“Mourn for the dead, but fight like hell for the living”

- Mother Jones

In order to create clear change in the world we have to engage in action. But in order for that action to mean something it needs to be guided by a clear compelling strategy that lays out a believable path to change.

### Step 1: Identify GOAL

- This should be a short statement that sets out exactly what you are trying to achieve. It is a description of how you want the world to look when you have won. ( *i.e. Apology to Maher Arar by Obama and Congress* ). For more AI-specific goals, view our [campaign](#) priorities.

### Step 2: Identify OBJECTIVES

- Objectives are the smaller short-term benchmarks you need to reach and things you need to change in order to get to your ultimate GOAL. ( *Collect a 1000 signatures in your high school for the Amnesty International petition in 2 months* )

### Campaign Steps:



### Step 3: Identify TARGETS

- This is the person who has the direct power to make the change you're looking for.
  - ↳ **The PRIMARY TARGET:** is the person or group you need to influence to achieve your GOAL (*School principal has the power let you campaign in in school*)
  - ↳ **SECONDARY TARGET:** People who can influence your primary target. You also want to target your efforts on these people and groups, as they can add pressure to your primary target. (deputy principal, teachers, school paper, student government)

### Step 4: Develop and Implement TACTICS

- Tactics are the activities you do to win the campaign. (*Amnesty International petition, media, events, speaking presentations*)

### Step 5: Bring it TOGETHER

- You can't do your whole campaign strategy at once. Work out what order you need to do your tactics or which tactics **strategically** make sense in order to reach your objectives. *Put in time for planning.*

Make sure your objectives are...

**SMART**  
**Specific**  
**Measurable**  
**Achievable**  
**Resourced**  
**Timed**

Your regional office is a fantastic support network for maximizing your campaign efforts.



“Be persistent. Don't be discouraged. Work as an SAC can involve a lot of nitty gritty things, so if you find yourself amidst a sea of emails or paperwork, just remember why you got involved with human rights in the first place. It is definitely challenging but rewarding work.”

- Stacy, UC Berkeley, California

#### Additional Resources:

- ASIA Pacific Youth Network [Strategic Campaigning](#)
- Amnesty International USA's latest [Core Action packet](#)



## Maximizing Your Campaign Impact

### Step 2: Identify OBJECTIVE

Share these resources with your student groups.

Before starting your campaign it is important to have a clear understanding of the **issues** and be able to come up with **Objectives** to achieve your campaign **goals**. Once you have received your campaign resources from Amnesty International, start trying to answer the questions below. The outline will give you the information to start building your campaign. If you are not sure about some of the answers you can always contact your FO in your Regional Office for help.

**Why** does this occur?

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**What** is your issue? What is wrong and what needs to change? What human rights are involved? Are any rights being denied?

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**How** will you persuade them or work with them to bring about change? What tactic would be effective?

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**Who** are some of the people in your community or school who can help you make the change you want?




## Maximizing Your Campaign Impact

### Step 3: Identify TARGETS

Share these resources with your student groups.

When your school group takes on an AI Campaign, most of the research has already been done for you by Campaign Directors and Researches, so you can hit the ground running and start campaigning right away! Although we all work on the same campaigns as members of AIUSA, each student activist will find different people and groups within their school or community who can help them achieve their campaign objectives - we call these people TARGETS. Lots of people and groups will have some interest in your campaign - but the trick is to know WHO has the direct power to make the change you want.

#### Example

**Campaign:** Security with Human Rights

**Goal:** Apology to Maher Arar by President Obama and Congress

**Objective:** Have 500 students in your school sign the Amnesty International petition calling on President Obama and Congress to apologize to Maher Arar.

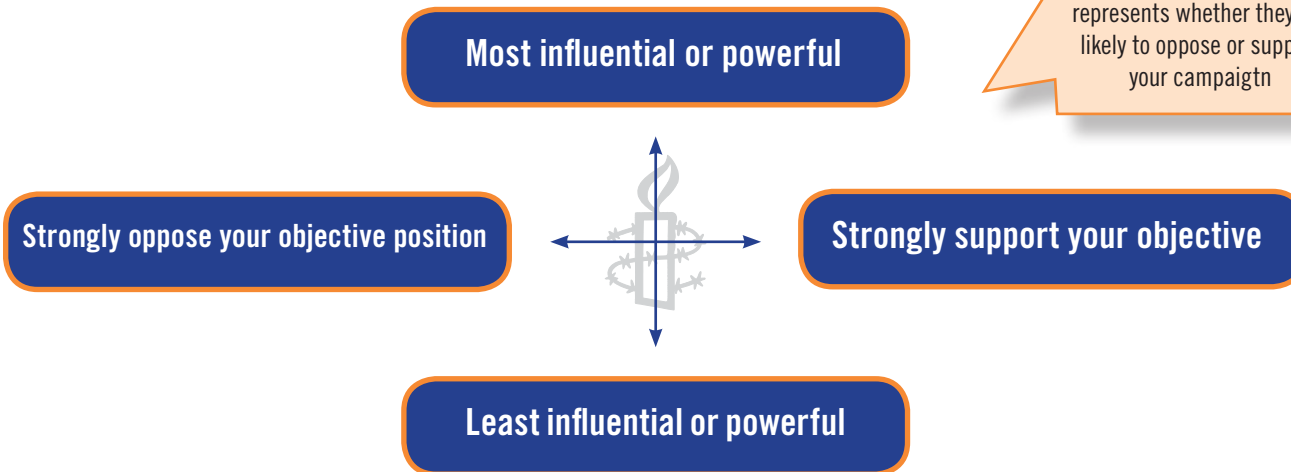
**Targets:** AI Group members, other students, sporting teams, deputy principal, student president, school newspaper and parents.

#### How to use the map:

- 1 List all the TARGETS that are involved with winning your campaign objective - anyone that you can think of who is in some way connected to your issue.
- 2 Mark on the axis where you think the target is placed – based on how much they support your campaign goal v’s how much they support the campaign. Sometimes the people who could really help you achieve your campaign are not interested in helping you at all!
- 3 Your primary targets will be people who are most able to help achieve your campaign objective.
- 4 Your secondary targets will be people who have relationships with your primary targets - you might need to use these secondary targets to build a relationship with your primary target.

**Note!**

The vertical axis represents their level of influence  
The horizontal axis represents whether they are likely to oppose or support your campaign



*“One step forward by someone who has no idea where they are going is better than someone who knows the way and does nothing”*

- Lhasang Tsering (Tibetan activist)



*Don't get discouraged! And don't expect the world to roll over to make way for you. Everybody you work with has a million things on their plate, so they can't do everything. But they are all committed and they all care about human rights, otherwise you wouldn't have their contact info in the first place. So keep in mind that they are listening to you and that you are making a difference, even if it isn't always clear how. Student group leaders are good kids. Keep your faith in them alive.*

- Joshua, University of Chicago, Illinois



## Maximizing Your Campaign Impact

**“A tactic is an activity that is undertaken by activists to reach a campaign goal”**

### Step 4: Develop and Implement TACTICS

As an SAC you will be supporting student activists to run successful campaigns, so it is important to understand a number of diverse tactics to enable you to support student groups in achieving a campaign goal. Tactics do not work just because they are smart, funny or because another group successfully did the same tactic – a tactic works when it helps you reach a campaign goal.

Common campaigning tactics:

- Events
- Creative arts (film, theatre, visual art, music)
- Lobbying
- Tabling
- Media
- Letter writing
- Online (blogging, youtube, facebook, twitter)

### Important

Student groups need to be sure of what their campaigning goals are before they can pick a tactic. Some common goals are: [\(Look at strategic campaigning section\)](#)

- Attract new members
- Bring about changes to laws
- Educate the wider public
- Gain the attention of a person in power or the media

**BE INSPIRED!** Watch this video about Townsend Harris High School (NY) Torture Awareness Demonstration



### Additional Resources:

- [Events and Actions for your group](#)
- [BIG Amnesty Skill Share](#)
- [AI E-Activism](#)

*“You may say I’m a dreamer, but I’m not the only one.”*  
- John Lennon



*“Your little letters and cards are like bombs when they drop into the offices of ministers and government officials. When the cards and letters arrived into our barracks they were like rays of sunshine. We need the sunshine... Please keep up your work for Amnesty International”*

- Sanar Yurdatapan, former prisoner of conscience in Turkey



*“Don’t give up easily.”*

- Khairunisa Malisa, University of the Ozarks, Arkansas

## Maximizing Your Campaign Impact

### Step 4: Develop and Implement TACTICS (continued)

- Once you have worked out all your tactics (and you might have a few) - you will need to weigh up how easy and achievable it is for your group.
- Consider how much impact your action will have (big, average, little)
- Write each of your tactics in the appropriate square within the grid
- After you have done this for all your tactics, select the one that is both realistic and effective

⇒ **How easy is it to achieve this action?**  
 ⇒ **Consider the time, resources, skills and opportunities you have**  
 ⇒ **You might even want to do a few of the tactics within your strategy**

**Don't be fooled!**  
 Sometimes easier actions can have greater impact overall!

		Difficult	Average	Easy
How much impact will this action have?	Big Impact			
	Average Impact			
Consider the type and number of people you can influence	Little Impact			



## Samples of Creative Activism from Around the Globe:

As a SAC, you will have to embrace your creative side from time to time. Each SAC develops his or her own unique approaches for addressing challenges and

finding success. From these examples, you can find inspiration, techniques, examples of successful campaign work, and suggested resources.



### IRELAND

AI **Ireland** student activists created murals addressing issues of global poverty and human rights abuses on the Belfast peaceline, a heavily trafficked public space in their community. One mural shows human rights campaigners blocking the path of bulldozers destroying homes in the developing world. The other highlights the environmental damage done to local communities by some of the world's biggest businesses.



### URUGUAY

Amnesty youth activists in **Uruguay** launched a street intervention called ((HIP HOP POR LA DIGNIDAD)). With a DJ spinning live records, and b-boys and b-girls breakdancing to the music, the activists used hip-hop to draw attention to AI and the Demand Dignity campaign



### PHILIPPINES

Youth activists in the **Philippines** launched the campaign Youth Poses for Dignity, for which they collected hundreds of photos of indigenous and non-indigenous youth. The photos were collated into a mosaic aimed at urging the National Commission for Indigenous Peoples to fulfill its obligations to protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples affected by mining.

**Want to see more?** Check out this [inspirational video](#) from AI Peru showing their youth involvement in the Demand Dignity Campaign:



### ALGERIA

Amnesty **Algeria** youth activists launched a photo action for Patrick Okoroafor, a Nigerian political prisoner who has been imprisoned unjustly for 14 years. The activists made paper cutouts of the numbers 14 and encourage youth to take pictures with the numbers. This simple but effective public awareness campaign could be adapted to highlight striking statistics about Maternal Mortality.

# PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

## Mapping Out the Year:

You have the skills, tools, and connections to organize for human rights change. Now it's time to put those resources to work and make an action plan for the year!

SACs should create a personal action plan -- capturing their own goals and plans for the year -- as well as assist and encourage student group leaders in making their own. Set long-term (semester or year-long) and short-term (one campaign or action) goals, identify

key dates and signature events, and organize them into the following charts. Then get organizing!

To assist in planning for each semester and year, use the below Student Planning Calendar. Work with your Field Organizer to identify and make progress towards your:

- Campaign / Human Right Goals
- Personal Goals
- Student Group Goals

*Without leaps of imagination, or dreaming, we lose the excitement of possibilities. Dreaming, after all, is a form of planning.*

- Gloria Steinem



**PLANNING WORKSHEET**

September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August
<b>Goals for FALL Semester</b>				<b>Goals for SPRING Semester</b>				<b>Goals for SUMMER Semester</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campaign / Human Right Goal:</li> <li>• Personal Goal:</li> <li>• Student Group Goal:</li> </ul>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campaign / Human Right Goal:</li> <li>• Personal Goal:</li> <li>• Student Group Goal:</li> </ul>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campaign / Human Right Goal:</li> <li>• Personal Goal:</li> <li>• Student Group Goal:</li> </ul>			
Key Opportunities Available:				Key Opportunities Available:				Key Opportunities Available:			
Challenges / Obstacles in the way:				Challenges / Obstacles in the way:				Challenges / Obstacles in the way:			
Possible solutions / tools to overcome these challenges / obstacles:				Possible solutions / tools to overcome these challenges / obstacles:				Possible solutions / tools to overcome these challenges / obstacles:			

### Helpful Hint

Make sure to plan for major school and community events (like finals!). Also include check-ins with student groups and your regional office. Sticking to an established date and time, like the third Wednesday of the month at 7pm will help planning. You may want to include these dates in your phone and set an alarm or reminder!

[Download and Customize this Student Planning Worksheet](#)



## Calendar 2011 - 2012: Signature Events

When Mapping out your activities for the year (and helping student groups do the same) keep in mind the below signature events and key dates.

Remember this is Amnesty's 50th so look to plan bolder and bigger events. By connecting your group's activities to the [Human Rights Ambassador Challenge](#), you will be in the running for special prizes and grants!

<b>SEPTEMBER</b> <small>Hispanic Heritage Month</small>	1st: Human Rights Ambassador Challenge - Webinar at 7 pm EST (4 pm PST), "Immigrant Rights are Human Rights" 8th: International Literacy Day 13th: Anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of Ingenious People 15th: International Day of Democracy 21st: International Day of Peace
<b>OCTOBER</b> <small>Domestic Awareness Month</small>	6th: Human Rights Ambassador Challenge Webinar at 7 pm EST (4 pm PST), "We Can Live without the Death Penalty" 10th: World Day Against Death Penalty (take action at <a href="http://www.amnestyusa.org/deathpenalty">www.amnestyusa.org/deathpenalty</a> ) 11th: National Coming Out Day; Indigenous People's Day 16th: World Food Day 17th: Day for the Eradication of Poverty (learn more at <a href="http://www.amnestyusa.org/demanddignity">www.amnestyusa.org/demanddignity</a> ) 24th: United Nations Day 28th: AIUSA Midwest Regional Conference in Kansas City, MO. 28-30
<b>NOVEMBER</b>	3rd: Human Rights Ambassador Challenge Webinar at 7 pm EST (4 pm PST), "Regional Power" 4th: AIUSA West Regional Conference in Los Angeles, CA. 4-6 4th: AIUSA South Regional Conference in Charlotte, NC. 4-5 11th: AIUSA Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference in National Harbor, MD. 11-13 12th: AIUSA Northeast Regional Conference in Boston, MA 25th: Elimination of Violence Against Women Day
<b>DECEMBER</b>	1st: World AIDS Day 1st: Human Rights Ambassador Challenge Webinar at 7 pm EST (4 pm PST), "Write for Rights" 7th: Anniversary of the first lethal injection (Texas, 1982) (learn more at <a href="http://www.amnestyusa.org/deathpenalty">www.amnestyusa.org/deathpenalty</a> ) 10th: Human Rights Day 18th: International Migrants Day

### Regional Conference:

*Fall semester (late October to mid-November)*

Every fall, each region holds its own conference where regional activists, members, and supporters meet to learn about, discuss, and act upon AIUSA's priority campaigns and cases. Individual members and groups also have the opportunity to vote on various resolutions impacting the mission, method, policy, organization, or allocation of resources. The regional conferences are also a place for members to network with each other, share ideas, and make plans for collaborative efforts.

### Global Write-A-Thon:

*Week around December 10 (International Human Rights Day)*

Each year hundreds of thousands of people across the world mark International Human Rights Day on December 10 by taking part in Amnesty International's Write for Rights Global Write-a-thon - the world's largest letter writing event. We write letters to demand that the rights of individuals are respected, protected and fulfilled. In doing so, we show solidarity with those suffering human rights abuses and work to bring about real change in people's lives.

## 10 Steps to a Successful Year:

### TO DO LIST for Student Groups

- Don't Operate Under the Radar: Register your group at [www.amnestyusa.org/sglogin](http://www.amnestyusa.org/sglogin). Identify which of AIUSA's priority campaign your group would like to participate in. Poll your members to see where members' interests lie. Determine what resources or advanced planning will be required.
- Check in with your Field Organizer or Student Area Coordinator regularly for resources, support and goodies.
- Set a standard meeting time & location for the semester/ year. Creating a calendar will help members plan their schedules accordingly.
- Register your group for the Urgent Action Network.
- Check with your school's activities or funding board to see if your group has a budget available. Research what other resources are available to your group, such as other organizations to collaborate with, use of office equipment, or meeting space.
- Sign up for recruitment opportunities, such as tabling at club fairs and school-wide announcements.
- Create a plan for attending your Regional Conference and the Annual General Meeting. Set aside funds for travel and accommodations.
- Set concrete goals for the year ahead. Consider ways to improve from last year's work.
- Send in your annual group assessment fee to help cover the cost of trainings, resources, materials and other support from AIUSA.

## Calendar 2011 – 2012 (continued)

<b>JANUARY</b>	11th: Anniversary of the arrival of detainees at Guantanamo (take action at <a href="http://www.amnestyusa.org/security">www.amnestyusa.org/security</a> ) 17th: Anniversary of the resumption of executions in the USA (learn more at <a href="http://www.amnestyusa.org/deathpenalty">www.amnestyusa.org/deathpenalty</a> ) 22nd: Anniversary of President Obama's missed deadline for closing Guantanamo detention facility (take action at <a href="http://www.amnestyusa.org/security">www.amnestyusa.org/security</a> )
<b>FEB</b> Black History Month	21st: International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
<b>MARCH</b> Women's History Month	8th: International Women's Day 22nd: World Water Day 30th- April 1: Annual General Meeting in Dever, CO ( <a href="http://www.amnestyusa.org/agm">www.amnestyusa.org/agm</a> )
<b>APRIL</b> Sexual Assault Awareness Month	7th: World Health Day 13th: Day of Silence 22nd: Earth Day
<b>MAY</b>	3rd: World Press Freedom Day 5th: Atenco Anniversary (take action at <a href="http://www.amnestyusa.org/demanddignity">www.amnestyusa.org/demanddignity</a> ) 28th: 51st Anniversary of the Founding of Amnesty International 28th: International Day of Action for Women's Health (take action at <a href="http://www.amnestyusa.org/demanddignity">www.amnestyusa.org/demanddignity</a> )
<b>JUNE</b> LGBT Pride Month Torture Awareness Month	4th: Tiananmen Square Anniversary 5th: World Environment Day 20th: World Refugee Day 26th: International Day in Support of Victims and Survivors of Torture (take action at <a href="http://www.amnestyusa.org/security">www.amnestyusa.org/security</a> ) 29th: Anniversary of Georgia v. Furman death penalty decision (learn more at <a href="http://www.amnestyusa.org/death-penalty">www.amnestyusa.org/death-penalty</a> )
<b>JULY</b>	4th: Independence Day
<b>AUGUST</b>	9th: Day of the World's Indigenous People 23rd: 8 Year Anniversary of Hurricane Katrina (learn more at <a href="http://www.amnestyusa.org/katrina">www.amnestyusa.org/katrina</a> ) 26th: Women's Equality Day 30th: International Day of the Disappeared

## Annual General Meeting

Denver, CO March 30-April 1

The Annual General Meeting is the one time per year that activists, members, volunteer leaders, staff, board members, and other interested individuals come together to:

- Learn about AIUSA's priority human rights cases and campaigns
- Learn how they can become more involved in the organization and the movement
- Network with other activists from across the country
- Have their say in the governance of AIUSA
- All students are welcome at the AGM, but in order for you or your groups to attend, careful planning is required.

### FALL 2011

- Figure out the budget policies of your college's or university's student activities fund:
  - ⇒ Apply early while activities funds are available; there can be a fixed budget per semester.
  - ⇒ Determine the level of interest in the event and develop a funding proposal.
  - ⇒ Consider the following factors when determining total costs: method of travel (air or bus), group rates for travel, bus deposits, and hotel accommodations
  - ⇒ If you already have the funds from your school's student activities fund, talk with your members to set aside an appropriate amount for travel expenses.
- Develop a fundraising strategy:
  - ⇒ Plan your budget for fundraisers ahead of time: It costs money to make money; consider all potential expenses such as publicity, food, entertainment, and facility costs.
  - ⇒ Register in advance for Early Bird Special Rates
  - ⇒ See "[Top 10 Things An SAC Should Know](#)" for more information about fundraising.

### WINTER 2011-12

- Finalize a list of attendees, collect deposits for travel; if people back out, this minimizes the impact on the group.
- Verify that each attendee is registered.
- Kick fundraising efforts into high gear!

### JANUARY /FEBRUARY 2012

- Finalize transportation details and confirm



## Making Transitions

### Helping Student Group Coordinators Transition

When group coordinators graduate or transition out of their leadership positions, oftentimes they leave behind a large void that needs to be filled in order for the group to stay active. You can help student group coordinators plan for this transition well in advance by encouraging them to keep an eye out for underclassmen members who show leadership potential, especially in the semester or two before their departure.

Urge group coordinators to delegate progressively larger and weightier roles to underclassmen, giving the prospective new leaders a sense of ownership and influence within the group. These roles may include:

- Facilitating meetings
- Filling out group paperwork (re-registration with AIUSA, re-recognition papers with your school, proposals for school funding, etc.)
- Building relationships with ally organizations (other student groups, non-profit orgs, etc.)

Ensure that members of your student groups complete the [Leader-to-Leader Binder](#), so that important information – such as contacts, meeting times, ally organizations, or funding sources – can be easily passed down to the new leadership.

### Your Own Transition

- If your next level of education (college, Master's, etc.) will be taking you to a different state, ask your Field Organizer to put you in contact with the FO in your new home. Chances are your new regional office will be ecstatic to have another seasoned student leader on board.
- Keep track of the new contacts (new student leaders, ally organizations, local businesses, etc.) you may have established over your term as SAC, and make sure they have someone to stay in touch with when you're gone. This person may be a group coordinator, another SAC, or your Field Organizer. Leave copies of your [SAC Contact Workbook](#), and Student Group Assessment behind for the next SAC to reference.
- Keep in touch with your FO and any other AIUSA staff you may have worked with during your term as SAC. Not only do they want to hear about the amazing things you go on to do (in school, in work, in life), but they also make great references for job applications.
- Evaluate your work as a SAC. Think about how the skills and experiences you've gained can be translated to a resume. What have you found to be your strengths as a leader and organizer? What were some of the challenges you faced as an SAC, and how did you overcome them?

*George Orwell once said: "The nationalist not only does not disapprove of atrocities committed by his own side, but he has a remarkable capacity for not even hearing about them." I suspect he would approve of the work we do. We are a direct answer to nationalism, in the sense Orwell intended the word. We might not always live up to such an exacting standard, but we aspire to unblinking honesty wherever possible.*

*- Joshua, University of Chicago, Illinois*



*As long as one dissident is in prison, our freedom will not be true. As long as one child is hungry, our life will be filled with anguish and shame. What all these victims need above all is to know that they are not alone; that we are not forgetting them, that when their voices are stifled we shall lend them ours, that while their freedom depends on ours, the quality of our freedom depends on theirs."*

*- Elie Wiesel*

Standing Up for Freedom Video made by local group in Pittsburgh, PA



## Future Opportunities

### Volunteer Leadership positions

There are also many opportunities available as volunteer member leaders. As a leader of a local group, a Country Specialist, SDPAC, LC or AC, you can use your skills and experience as a SAC to be a leader in another Amnesty volunteer position. For descriptions of these positions, see page 8 and visit the website for more information.

### Internships

Interns are an integral part of AIUSA's day-to-day functions. Whether you're looking for experience in regional organizing, research, media relations, campaigning, fundraising, or any other aspect of non-profit, grassroots human rights advocacy, you can find an AIUSA internship that suits your interests.

Internships are offered in each of AIUSA's regional offices, as well as in the New York headquarters and Washington DC offices. Check the website for up-to-date information on application deadlines and requirements.

### Young Professionals Amnesty International (YPAI) networks



YPAI acts as a bridge for AIUSA activists who have graduated out of student groups and are looking to stay active within the organization as they enter the workforce. YPAI provides a unique networking opportunity for present and prospective human rights leaders to take part in fun social activities like Human Rights Happy Hours, Amnesty BBQ's, Human Rights Film Screenings, and the list goes on.

YPAI networks are springing up in cities across the US, and many of them are led by former SAC's. See if there is a [YPAI network near you](#), or start one in your community!

### **Career Development**

Your time as a SAC will equip you with new knowledge, skills and experience to take with you in other work with Amnesty, other human rights work, and beyond! The SAC will develop experience in:

- Leadership and teambuilding, working with a variety of partners to achieve a goal
- Knowledge of human rights issues and a major grassroots human rights organization
- Communications and liaison work at national, state and regional levels
- Initiating new projects and strengthening preexisting ones
- Campaign for human rights through diverse and creative tactics and special events
- At the end of your time as SAC, speak with your Field Organizer about how your experience can support your future ambitions, or for a possible recommendation or reference.



### **Early Beginnings: Laura Moyer's Amnesty Story**

*"Everything that I was contributing to Amnesty I was getting back tenfold in terms of the kind of education I was getting, about the world, about issues of injustice, and learning about the skills for advocacy... I think my path has been one of following my passion for human rights, and being willing to try new things, and I feel like Amnesty has been a really nurturing environment where I've been able to put my initiative to good work, no matter what my volunteer or paid job has been"*

— Laura Moyer, Death Penalty Abolition Campaign Director



















Laura began work with Amnesty in a student group when she was in eighth grade! She eventually went on to start a group at her college, become an SAC, and work as an Intern in Atlanta. She has been a staff member at Amnesty International for the past 13 years, having held five different positions, and currently is the Campaign Director for the Abolish the Death Penalty campaign.

*"With a successful semester of campaigning and organizing with my Amnesty student group, I decided to apply for an internship with AIUSA. Because of my familiarity with the organization and examples of coordinating, mobilizing and planning events, I was given an internship with the Organizing, Membership and Campaigns Department. My experience as a student group leader has proven instrumental in my success as an AI intern, and vice versa – the knowledge that I have gained as an intern has taught me many invaluable skills and has inspired many new ideas that are sure to make a lasting impact on my group."*

— Caroline, Columbia University, NY.



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*"Peace can only last where human rights are respected, where the people are fed, and where individuals and nations are free."*

*-- His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama*

*"I am only one,  
But still I am one.  
I cannot do everything,  
But still I can do something;  
And because I cannot do everything  
I will not refuse to do the something that I can do."  
- Edward Everett*

*"Be certain that you do not die without having done something wonderful for humanity."*

*- Maya Angelou*

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*“Starting an Amnesty group in college was a tremendous experience for me. It was a lot of work but also tons of fun. We did innovative campaigns that made our otherwise unengaged student body stand up and take notice of human rights. That experience has helped shape what I eventually wanted to do as a career.”*

*— Gouri Sadhwani,  
AIUSA Deputy Executive Director Organizing,  
Membership and Campaigns Department*



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