



## Coalition Building 101

In the struggle for human rights, our strength and our ability to **make a difference** increases when we work in coordination with other groups on campus and in our local communities. **Together**, we can accomplish bigger goals, build broader support and make the message more compelling to a wider audience.

1. **Identify the issue** you want to work on. Here are a few questions your group should answer:
  - a. What are Amnesty International's policies and goals on this issue?
  - b. What are your group's particular goals on this issue?
  - c. What do you hope to accomplish on this issue?
2. **Identify groups** that might be interested in the same issue. Other human rights groups and potential allies can be found among service and special-cause groups, college student associations, faith groups, and youth groups.
3. **Develop a strategy** for inviting others to join you in the very beginning stages of your planning. Honor the work that organizations have been doing before Amnesty.
4. **Maintain communication.** Keeping all participating groups updated and involved in the decision-making process is key to collaboration. Assign a member of your group to meet with a representative of the other group.
5. **Be clear and upfront** about your interests and expectations, and remember to listen equally to their interests and expectations. Coalition building should be transformative not transactional.
6. **Be specific.** When defining your goal and planning your strategy or event, be as specific as possible. Concrete expectations are easier to fulfill than abstract ideas or vague plans. Will this collaboration be long- or short-term?
7. **Assign responsibilities.** After each meeting, make sure that tasks are divided according to each person's abilities and interest.

**Organizing Tip:** When stepping into communities that you don't identify with or come from it is very important to introduce yourself or group to those who are in the community and why you're there. Don't make demands or dictate but explain your capacity and how you can support. Also, make room for those in the community to express themselves -- don't dominate the conversation. Listen, listen, listen. Take notes or repeat what people say to show that you understand and heard what was said.