

PRACTICAL GUIDE TO TABLING



Thank you for organizing an Amnesty International information/action table!

Tabling is an important and essential tool for recruiting new members, gathering signatures, and building support for your group's work. It is one of the simplest and most effective ways to increase the visibility of Amnesty International in your community or at your school.

The purpose of a tabling is threefold: to educate about human rights issues, engage and mobilize on human rights issues, and recruit new members and activists.

Step 1: Find Opportunities to Table

PARTNER EVENTS

Amnesty is often invited by community groups, schools, and other organizations that are holding film festivals, public lectures and conferences to partner on these events. This often means promoting the event through our social media and being invited to table.

Checklist for tabling at an event:

- Prioritize opportunities that intersect with Amnesty's work
- Be clear that Amnesty is not endorsing or negating the ideas or opinions promoted by the event but simply supporting discussion around the subject
- Make sure the event works within your schedule and that you have adequate time to organize volunteers

THREE WAYS TO CREATE YOUR OWN OPPORTUNITIES TO TABLE

1. Set up a table at events that you or your group are organizing (e.g. Write 4 Rights or a public talk) and use it as an opportunity to reach out to the wider community.
2. Check out the Activism Guide for Amnesty International priority campaigns and actions, and plan tabling opportunities accordingly.
3. Just get out there when you have capacity and energy! Tabling on campus or at community events is a great way to connect to people and increase Amnesty's visibility.

Step 2: Coordinate the Logistics

QUESTIONS FOR THE EVENT ORGANIZER

Use the checklist on the final page to ensure you have the information you need to ensure success tabling at a school or community event.

VOLUNTEER TIMETABLE

Send out a call to other Amnesty supporters to assist you in tabling. Try to schedule two volunteers to table, one who can remain at the table and one to walk around with the clipboard. Try to pair new members/volunteers with experienced members/volunteers. Choose your dates and times strategically; if it is a multi-day event, pick the dates (like opening night or the keynote) that will likely have higher attendance and plan to table during the times with the greatest likelihood of a good crowd. This way you can increase your impact without exhausting volunteers.

Step 3: Choose Your Issue

CHOOSING ACTIONS

Actions are the things you want people to do for human rights issues when they visit your table and may take the form of a petition, postcard, photo action, phone call, or other act. There are some important things to remember when choosing actions:

- Actions should be **relevant** to current Amnesty campaigns and not be out of date.
- Actions should be **appropriate** for the audience and community in which you are tabling. For example, if you are at a Pride event, an LGBTI rights petition makes more sense than a maternal mortality postcard.
- Actions should be easy and **quick** for people walking by. Petitions or postcard actions will generally yield more success than asking people to write a letter -- few people will spend more than 3-5 minutes at the table.
- It is also important for you to limit the number of actions at your table. It is better to have 1-3 key actions on related areas of work than 5 or more actions on a wide range of issues.

UNDERSTANDING THE ACTIONS

Familiarize yourself with the issues! When you have selected which actions to feature, review the Amnesty website for background information. Volunteers should be able to briefly describe the issue and why it is important to them. They should also be able to explain why it is important for everyone to take action, starting with the petitions or postcards you have at the table. Make sure volunteers know that if they don't have the answer for some questions, it is better to refer people to the website than guess at the right answer.

Step 4: Perfect Your Tabling Techniques

TALKING TO THE PUBLIC

When tabling, always be ready to talk with people who are passing by. Say hello and ask if they have heard of Amnesty International. If they have, introduce the actions on your tabling event and invite them to sign each one. Then, take the opportunity to share information about your group, including the types of actions you take and the issues you are working on. If they have not heard of Amnesty, tell them what Amnesty stands for (our mission statement), what you like about Amnesty, and which campaign actions you're featuring today. Invite them to also complete the sign up sheet to hear back from Amnesty.

Check out [this video](#) showing good tabling techniques.

PROMOTING GETTING INVOLVED

Not only will tabling result in actions being taken for human rights, but it's also an invaluable way to promote and grow your Amnesty International group. While talking with people about Amnesty International, share with them what your group does and how they might become more involved. Be prepared to talk about ways of supporting Amnesty other than joining your group, such as becoming a member of Amnesty International or joining another group in your area. Have on hand brochures, flyers, bookmarks, or business cards that promote your group. These items should have key information about your group, your social media channel, and a way to contact you.

Step 5: Follow Up

CONTACTING NEW MEMBERS

Following the tabling event, add new people to your group email list. Within one week, contact those who signed up to thank them for stopping by the table and invite them to an upcoming meeting or event. Make sure that new contacts have a way of getting in touch with the group, perhaps through the group's New Member Coordinator or at least a group email address.

SENDING ACTIONS

A signed petition or postcard doesn't make an impact on human rights if it never reaches the intended target. Following the event, gather and sort all signed petitions, postcards, or other actions. Send them to the address listed on the action, and if no address is listed please send them to the National office.

As a reminder, do not contact or distribute information of those who took action unless they also completed the sign-up sheet.

ONGOING

Periodically check Amnesty International's website, social media feeds, and e-newsletters for up-to-date human rights information on the issues you have taken action on. Inform your group if there have been any developments, such as the release of a Prisoner of Conscience. **Sharing successes** helps people see the importance of the actions they helped with in the past.

Debrief with your group after tabling to identify best practices and things to avoid. Reflect on which actions generate the greatest response and help volunteers find answers to questions they were unable to answer while tabling.

ESSENTIAL TABLING MATERIALS

- Check out the [Activism Guide](http://www.amnesty.ca/get-involved/resources-activists/seasonal-activism-guide) (www.amnesty.ca/get-involved/resources-activists/seasonal-activism-guide)
- Learn about campaigns [Campaign and Issue Resources](http://www.amnesty.ca/our-work) (www.amnesty.ca/our-work)
- Download and print petitions from the [Petitions Library](http://www.amnesty.ca/get-involved/take-action-now/petition-library) (www.amnesty.ca/get-involved/take-action-now/petition-library)
- Visible Amnesty branding (posters, stickers, banners) and action postcards – [order here](http://amnestyinternationalcanada.myshopify.com) (amnestyinternationalcanada.myshopify.com)
- Sign up sheet (link to be added when posted)



Community Partner – Tabling and Outreach Checklist

Use this checklist to gather the information you need to ensure successful tabling!

Name of host organization	
Name and email for event organizer/liaison	
Name of event and short description	
Event date(s):	
List the best times to table: (Consider that it is often best to table before or after an event, like a play, screening or lecture, rather than during)	
Is there a fee to table at the event? (AI offers very limited funds for tabling events) <input type="checkbox"/> No fees <input type="checkbox"/> Fees apply \$_____ (circle one: daily / whole event)	
What day and time is set up?	What day and time is take down?
Will a table and two chairs be provided at the event?	
If the event is outside, will a tent or other cover be provided?	
If this is a ticketed event, are free or discounted tickets available to offer to Amnesty supporter and volunteers?	
Social media links for cross-promotion	
Event website	Event Facebook page
Event Twitter handle	Other