

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

We are 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 let volunteers know

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 active periods for Amnesty International priority campaigns (i.e. World Refugee Day and Safe Third Country Campaign) 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 make sure you have the information you need to ensure success tabling at a school or community event.

VOLUNTEER TIMETABLE

Send a call out to other Amnesty supporters to assist you in tabling. Try to schedule two Amnesty volunteers to table, one who can sit at the table and one to walk around with the clipboard. Try to pair new members/volunteers with experienced members/volunteers. Narrow down and 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 highest amount of foot traffic. 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 issues 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 parade, an LGBT rights petition makes more sense than a maternal mortality postcard.
- Actions should be easy and **quick** for passersby. Petitions or postcard actions will generally yield more success than a hand-written letter because few people have time to spend at the table beyond 3-5 minutes.
- 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 similar areas of work than 5+ actions on a number of different issues.

UNDERSTANDING THE ACTIONS

Familiarize yourself with the issues! Make sure when choosing your actions you print and read the accompanying resources for background information. Volunteers should be able to speak about each of the actions or issues they will present while tabling. They should know enough background on the issue to be able to speak about why it is important, as well as what the “ask” is – what do you want someone to do? If asked a question beyond their knowledge, the volunteer should feel comfortable referring people to table handouts or to www.amnesty.ca for more information.

Step 4: Perfect Your Tabling Techniques

TALKING TO THE PUBLIC

When tabling, volunteers should stand up to talk with people who are passing by. When approached, remember to say hello and ask if they have heard of Amnesty International. If they have, introduce the actions chosen for your tabling event and ask them if they would like to sign. 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, briefly tell them about the history, mission and basic background on priority campaigns and issues.

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 and a way to contact you.

Step 5: Follow Up

CONTACTING NEW MEMBERS

Following the tabling event, input all contact information into your group's database or email list. Within one week, contact those who signed up to thank them for stopping by the table and initiate contact with a member of your group. Invite them to an upcoming meeting or event and address any questions they asked about while at your table. Make sure that new contacts have a way of getting in touch with the group, such as the New Member Coordinator or generic 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, Facebook page, and newsletter 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