

# GROWING YOUR LOCAL GROUP

 THE EQUALITY TRUST

# THE EQUALITY TRUST

## GROWING YOUR LOCAL GROUP

The Equality Trust wants to support you with your campaigning work. However, we do not want to direct your group on what to do or how to do it.

We strongly recommend that your group draws up some strategic objectives and starts to plan how you might meet these.

## SETTING A STRATEGY AND DEVISING PLANS TO DELIVER THAT STRATEGY

Having an agreed strategy for your group will increase its attractiveness to existing and new members as it will show a unity of purpose and a clear sense of direction. Aspects you will probably wish to consider in setting your strategy are:

- what do you want the group to have achieved in the next year or two?
- how do you see your group in terms of members and activity over the next year or two?

We also strongly recommend that you consider:

- the interests, passions and priorities of your group's members,
- the major social and economic issues in your area, particularly in relation to marginalised or underrepresented groups within your community, including BAME, women, disabled and LGBTQI people and young people,
- the current campaigns of The Equality Trust,
- The Equality Trust's strategy

## ESTABLISH THE 'WHAT', 'WHO' AND 'HOW'

**What** are the issues you want to campaign on? Ensure your issue has a tangible outcome. For example, asking the council to pay the real Living Wage.

**Who** else do you need to engage with on this issue? Consider allies, decision-makers and those who might oppose your campaign objectives.

**How** are you going to raise this issue in a way that engages the wider community and builds momentum towards winning your objectives? Consider all the different types of activities and tactics your group could organise to help gain awareness and support for your issue.

## ENGAGING NEW MEMBERS

A crucial step in organising your group is engaging new members. Consider:

- Does the group have an attractive leaflet, website or social media profile that tells people about the group?
- Are group meetings welcoming, well facilitated and do new people feel comfortable participating?
- Does your group actively encourage people from a diverse background to get involved? Does it identify and address practices which may create barriers?
- Are your group meetings held in an accessible and easy to find venue (note that not everyone finds the local pub friendly or accessible)?
- Are new members able to get quickly involved taking on actions during the group meetings?
- Does your group ask new members what they think about the group's plans?
- Does your group ask new members what they might like to do for the group?
- Are new members given the right amount of responsibility (not too much or too little)?
- Does the group rotate its responsibilities? If the group has formalised roles, such as group chair, are these roles selected at least once a year?
- Does the group offer some fun and informal opportunities in addition to your campaigning?
- Do all group members regularly act as ambassadors for the group, actively recruiting new people?

Identifying and recruiting new people to your group often comes down to effective conversations, either face to face, online or over the phone.

It is also really useful to develop and practise your personal narratives – the story of why tackling

inequality matters to you and why you think it matters more widely. Your personal stories are a powerful way of making connections with other people based on your shared values. For more on this and our training on sharing your story, please contact: [info@equalitytrust.org.uk](mailto:info@equalitytrust.org.uk).

## FOLLOWING UP NEW MEMBERS MUST BE FAST AND MEANINGFUL

It's important to recognise that when new members want to join your group, they often want something immediate and impactful to do. Include them in your strategy and ask them what they think. Asking new members what skills they have to contribute and what they are most interested in doing and what skills they would like to develop will help to ensure that your new members are both doing what they are most comfortable with as well as growing and developing.

An active campaign with ongoing practical tasks will nourish new members and avoid new members 'drifting'. When you are developing your group's strategy, identify several active tasks and roles for new

members so that they can hit the ground running. Simple ideas include:

- Does your group have a simple and attractive leaflet that a new member could distribute to other sympathetic organisations?
- Could they come with you to meet with another community leader to talk about the campaign issue?
- Are they good with social media? Could they help create some interesting tweets/Facebook/Instagram posts for your social media profile?
- Are there any networks that they are involved in where they could promote your campaign?

## OUTREACH

Inequality impacts so many aspects of life in the UK that it is fairly easy to find people working in other areas who are sympathetic to the idea of reducing inequality. The following are just some examples of organisations that local groups have connected with in their campaigning and who have, in turn, joined their local groups:

- other local campaigning groups (disability groups, race equality and BAME rights, women's rights and advocacy, LGBTQI groups, living wage groups, carers' groups)

- local political groups\*
- co-operatives
- faith organisations
- charities such as food banks and advocacy groups
- trade union branches
- student groups
- green or climate groups
- local business groups
- local universities
- local schools
- the local citizens advice office
- the local council of voluntary organisations

## CONNECTING WITH THE EQUALITY TRUST'S OTHER LOCAL GROUPS

As soon as your group affiliates to The Equality Trust you are automatically part of a network of active local groups. The local groups can and do learn from each other so there is never any shortage of ideas and

resources to help grow your activity and grow your group via our regular video call meetings. You can also find out about local groups on The Equality Trust website, and in our latest news.

\* As a registered charity, The Equality Trust is regulated by the Charity Commission, which requires that our campaigning activities and any involvement with political parties must be balanced.

## STAY FLEXIBLE—THE JOURNEY WILL HAVE UPS AND DOWNS

Local groups, like many other voluntary groups, are subject to the availability and energies of their members. Sometimes members will have other more important priorities in life that will draw their attention away from the group and its activities. So it's important to remember to be flexible and understanding. Your

group will change shape over time and in response to these events, but this is often positive as it can lead to a more dynamic group. Use these as opportunities to review where the group has got to and to redevelop your strategy for the future.

## SHARE YOUR EFFORTS AND CELEBRATE YOUR SUCCESSES

Your group will make many efforts and have many successes. When you do, share them with us and all the other local groups. The Equality Trust will promote all efforts and successes via its newsletter and we strongly encourage groups to connect and share on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and in the media.

Even when something hasn't gone that well, sharing these trials will allow us all to learn and grow so we can plan to get better results next time. The more your group feels part of a wider movement that is achieving success, the more likely it is that you can inspire your members and attract new ones.

Find us on [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [YouTube](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

The Equality Trust would like to gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Barrow Cadbury Trust that has made this work possible.

