

SETTING UP A GLOBAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Adapted from: *Seeds for Change: In-depth Guide to Effective Groups*

Available here: <https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/effectivgroups.pdf>

WHY SET ONE UP?

You may be really interested in Global Justice issues as an individual but together you can achieve a lot more than alone - it's more fun, you can gain new skills as people take different roles. You can learn a lot about a justice issue and take an action to create meaningful change on something you care about.

GUIDANCE FOR SETTING UP A GLOBAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE IN YOUR SCHOOL

1. FINDING THE RIGHT PEOPLE TO JOIN

Before you reach out to involve people in your group you need to decide a few things. This will ensure that the people that are joining know what they are signing up to and are on the same page as you! Questions to ask:

- **What is the purpose of the group?**
 - Do you have a specific issue you want to work on?
 - Do you aim to take actions?
- **How will you work?** (*see page. 3 getting started*)
 - Do you want people to have specific roles e.g. chair person, secretary, treasurer or should these roles rotate?
 - How will you make decisions
- **Who?**
 - If you are trying to make change in your school, who might be important to invite? Students from all years? Teachers?

2. PUTTING THE WORD OUT ABOUT YOUR GROUP – INVITING OTHERS

To get others on board you may need to advertise. Ideas can include:

- Flyers and posters in the school
- Ask your teachers if they know of any students in other classes who might be interested
- Announcement over the intercom
- Create a stand in your school

3. EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

The first few meetings are a great opportunity to set the tone for how your group will work together. Some people will come to check out the first meeting and if they feel welcomed and inspired will be much more likely to come back. People join groups for lots of reasons but the main to are:

- **Getting things done** – working on achieving a goal through decisions and tasks
- **Hanging out with friends** – building relationships and having a positive time in a group

You need to make sure your meetings plan to do both e.g. starting with lunch and a chat, followed by a structured meeting!

Consider the following:

- What time will you meet?
- Where?
- What teachers can support you and what will be their role?
 - You may need a teacher to organise a space for you and supervise. What other support do you need? Will teachers be invited to join the meetings as equal members or would you rather just pitch ideas to teachers for their opinions and inputs?

4. FACILITATING A MEETING

A good facilitator helps the group have an effective and inclusive meeting. They do not have any more influence over the decision than anyone else, rather help the process of making a decision.

You can pick a facilitator for the group each week or you can rotate the role:

- **Make sure the meetings happen** - double check with your teacher that place is booked and time confirmed
- **Organise an agenda** – a list of things to be covered in the meeting. Create a template with standing items (things to be covered each time) and update
- **Organise discussion** – ensuring everyone can equally participate and hear each other. This can include keeping the conversation on one topic, summarising discussion to help focus and finalise decisions, making sure everyone gets to speak

More on facilitating meetings: <https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/shortfacilitation>

5. TAKE GOOD MINUTES

Minutes are another job that can be taken on by one person or the job rotated. Minutes are taken to record the meeting including:

- What was discussed,
- What was decided

- What tasks are to be done, by who and when

Make sure ye decide how you will take minutes and keep them all in the same place for reference.

Sample Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. How the meeting works (if relevant)
3. Review last minutes and action points
4. Report back on action points
5. Standing items (e.g. teacher update, communication, events)
6. Any other business (AOB) e.g. announcements, news, updates etc
7. Action time (time spent doing things needed e.g. planning, drafting leaflets etc)
8. Next meeting (confirmation of date, facilitator, minute keeper etc)

GETTING STARTED - QUESTIONS TO WORK OUT:

To make sure everyone is on the same page, take time at the beginning of the groups formation to iron out the following questions:

- **What is the purpose of the group?** Agree aims and discuss honestly what people hope to get out of it. Ensure you write down your aims as they are a reference point for making decisions about your direction and activities moving forward. Keep referring back to them! Be specific enough to give direction but not specific enough that they become tasks! They are a guiding vision for your group.
 - **How?** Everyone could write what they hope to get out of the group on post-its. Collect them and cluster them to common themes.
- **Choose a name!** Something that is snappy and identifies your purpose to people who don't know anything about you! Make this process fun!
- **Who can be part of the group?** Decide as a group how other people can join the group. Is it totally open i.e. anyone who agrees with the aims can join or what considerations might you have? You might want to target people to join i.e. year groups not involved or people who have specific skills.
- **How will you make decisions?** There are many ways to make decisions as a group depending on what is appropriate. It is easier for everyone to participate if you are clear from the beginning what method you will use when.

- **Consensus Decision Making**
 - **What** - Where a group are committed to exploring an issue until they come up with a solution that everyone affected can support or at least can live with. Usually starts with a discussion then one person makes a proposal. People make suggestions for that to change until they come to a point where everyone is satisfied. Hand signals can be very useful to do this. **See: X**
 - **Pros** – Everyone feels respected and listened to. Group are more connected and decisions are likely to be implemented because everyone has been part of making them.
 - **Cons** – Takes time
- **Voting**
 - **What** – Issue is discussed and a vote is taken on a proposal. If majority agrees with it, it can go ahead. Can also use ‘super majorities’ where two thirds of the group have to agree for it to pass.
 - **Pros** – Quicker and good if people aren’t confident to express their opinions in the discussion
 - **Cons** – Some may not be happy with the outcome. This may affect their motivation.
- **How Will You Organise To Do Your Work?**

There are many ways your group can organise depending on how many people are involved and what you plan to do. It is important to ensure the work is spread out evenly, no-one person is getting overloaded with too much work and everyone feels involved and included. Here are a few options:

Individual Roles – Where the group choose people for key roles e.g. treasurer, chair/facilitator, communications officer etc.

- **Pros** – everyone knows their role and what they need to do. People can have a role that suits their skills and interests
- **Cons** – may lead to certain people in the group feeling more connected to the group than others and may not encourage shared responsibility

Working Groups – Where some roles can be taken on by a group of people e.g. the finance group, media group etc.

- **Pros** – spreads out the workload and means new people can join and have a meaningful role in a group.
- **Cons** – Small groups could become cliquey – so do make sure you are welcoming to new people!

Everyone doing everything / Rotation – Tasks can be allocated in a one-off way in meetings or rotated between different members or done by everyone together.

- **Pros** – Works well in a very small group. All members get a good overview of what is happening and are connected to what’s going on. Shares “good” and “bad” jobs and people don’t get stuck in roles.
- **Cons** – Harder to hold people account and keep track. A clear rotation system is needed!

For more information (including how to deal with conflicts and power dynamics) see:

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Available here: <https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/effectiveworkgroups.pdf>