

Starting a new RESULTS group in your community

▶ Getting started

The most difficult part of setting up a new RESULTS group can be finding other like-minded people to join your group, or at least come along to a meeting to find out more. The first thing you need to do is to start talking to people about RESULTS and how they can make a difference by getting involved. Talking to people – from conversations with individuals to presentations to groups – is by far the most effective way of engaging others, but of course will require more time and effort than simply posting flyers around town. Don't be afraid to reach out to people, often RESULTS is just what people have been looking for.

▶ Start with your own personal networks

Consider all the people you know: friends, family, colleagues, classmates and people you have met through activities such as sports, volunteering or evening classes. Then think about the people they know and you'll find you create a whole network of people you can invite to join RESULTS. It is worth creating a 'network map' (a spider diagram of all these groups of people) and following up to make sure the word has got out to all of them. Don't drag along unwilling friends just to make up numbers. Instead ask people who are not able to commit to being involved themselves to spread the word for you- you'll be amazed at the number of people you're linked to who might want to be involved.

Beyond your own personal networks, there are likely to be other groups in your community that would be interested in learning about RESULTS:

Student groups: Your local universities and colleges may offer subjects such as international relations, development studies and human geography. Try and speak to students who are interested in these subjects as well as societies with an international focus e.g. Amnesty International groups and cultural societies. You could also try and get a piece about RESULTS in the university or college paper, or an advert in the University bulletin.

Volunteer/Job centres: If you have a few minutes to fill out the forms, these centres will place the RESULTS group in their database of volunteer activities. The RESULTS office may have already registered with your volunteer centre, so do check to find out if there is already an advert before you fill out the forms. We can also provide you with a template for new registrations.

Advertise online: Create a Facebook group or Twitter profile and encourage local friends to join. You can also promote your local group on volunteer websites such as Meetup and Do-It.

Community centres: These are often the heart of your community. Go and speak to local groups, and place adverts on their noticeboards. Try to speak to a range of groups, you might expect students or advocacy groups to be most responsive but actually you may receive more interest from the mothers and toddlers group or the local bakery class!

Faith-based organisations: Speak to the leaders of your local religious institutions and offer to go and give a talk, or ask them to give a quick notice about your RESULTS group and what it offers.

Local media: Try and create a relationship with some local reporters - grab a coffee with them and the chances are they'll run a piece on your new group and be more receptive to future requests on behalf of the group.

▶ Important

You will find that from the dozens of people you speak to, only a handful will actually come along to a meeting but, do not be disappointed. The work that RESULTS does is powerful and exciting but isn't going to be for everyone. Keep going and know that even if you start by finding just a handful of people to join your group, this is enough to be worth the effort and to make an impact. You can also keep building on this foundation as you go. Make sure you have a friend or relative ready to support you as you go through the process of starting a new group and remember that RESULTS staff and other group leaders are always there to help you.

▶ Holding a 'Welcome to RESULTS' event

It is worth holding a 'Welcome to RESULTS Event' as a means of introducing people in your community to RESULTS. This is a great way to inform, and engage, people before inviting them to come along to a regular briefing and action meeting. The welcome event can be anything you want, an informal get together at your home where you chat about RESULTS, or a full-scale presentation in a room you hire. The aim of the event should be to excite people about the work of RESULTS and their own potential to make a difference so that they start coming along to monthly meetings (see our briefing sheet *Hosting a 'Welcome to RESULTS' Event* for more information). Whatever kind of event you plan to hold, the RESULTS office can help you to prepare. If you do not feel confident enough to lead the event you can invite a member of staff, or an experienced volunteer from another group, to come along and help out.

▶ Now you're ready to form your group

As a result of your community outreach and/or welcome event, you will hopefully have identified a group of people that are ready to come along to your first monthly meeting.

These are generally held on the evening of the first Tuesday of each month to coincide with the national conference call (see our briefing sheet *'Organising a Monthly Briefing & Action Meeting'* for more information). Each month a specific action will be recommended such as writing a letter to an MP or a letter to the editor of a newspaper. It is worth doing a little research before the meeting- so that you have contact details of the relevant MPs or copies of newspapers to read through for hooks-as this makes it easier to coordinate the group's actions. If the group chooses to do their actions on their own, you should encourage them to let you know when they have done so, or even chase them up after a few days as it is too easy to get distracted by other things! For the first few actions it could be really helpful to draft the letters together at the meeting. This way, you can share your thoughts and encourage others with feedback.

▶ Initial preparation:

Make contact with the RESULTS office and confirm which member(s) of staff are going to support you throughout the process of starting a group.

Find a buddy – either a friend, relative or other RESULTS member – to motivate and reassure you along the way.

Learn the basic information about RESULTS so that you are ready to answer other people's questions.

Take one of the recent actions to your welcome event. It is great to be able to show others a response from your MP, or a letter you have had published in the newspaper, so that others can see what is possible. If you can't do this, use one of the stories or publications on our website to illustrate how powerful an impact an individual can make.

Set up an email account for your group e.g. results.yourtown@gmail.com. Having a unique address will make it easy to pass on to others in case someone takes over as group leader or you want to share the responsibility.

▶ Getting a group together:

Create a network map of all the people you know.

Contact everyone in your network map (even those who you think won't be interested) and ask if they would like to join the group.

Ask everyone you talk to if they can pass on the invitation to their networks as well.

Research local community groups, volunteer centres, universities, faith-based organisations and other networks with an interest in international issues. Give them a call and ask if you can go and speak to them about RESULTS and your local group.

Promote RESULTS through your local media, volunteer centres and on social media.

Host a 'Welcome to RESULTS' event where you can introduce people to RESULTS and invite them to join you for the next monthly meeting.

Collect contact details (name, email, phone number and postcode) so that you can send people the details of your upcoming group meeting and follow up with them afterwards. Having their postcode helps keep track of which MPs your group reaches.

▶ Ahead of your first monthly meeting:

Choose a venue for your first meeting.

Get a phone with loudspeaker and mute button.

Send out invitations to the meeting along with the briefing materials.

Do some research in preparation for the actions so that you can be ready to support the others.

▶ After your first meeting:

Contact the RESULTS office and let them know how it went!