

How to... set up a new group

If you want to set up a new group make sure you let us know. We will then allocate a member of the team as your point of contact for the Group. They will be able to provide advice, support and materials.

It is useful to decide who in the group will take on which roles and responsibilities, for example for example; group co-ordinator, who will look after group finances, Newsletter Editor etc

You should avoid relying on people to do the same tasks year on year. By sharing the responsibilities, you avoid people feeling overly relied upon. You will also develop the skills of your members by giving them experience of different types of activity.

All members of the Group should act in accordance Oxfam's culture and beliefs – respecting alternative points of view and valuing diversity.

Participative meetings for effective action

Meetings are a good way to share ideas and organise effective action. They should be *accessible, friendly, effective, organised, motivating and action focused*.

An agenda can help you to ensure that everything you need to cover gets discussed.

Write down action points and key decisions for reference at the next meeting, and to help people who weren't present, but are interested in staying involved.

There are many different things you can do: Invite a speaker, organise a skill-sharing session, a social event.

Communicating with your members

Clear lines of communication are important in making your Group a success. Some of the options are *Newsletters, Minutes of meetings, Phone calls, email groups and websites*. Do check that people are happy to share their details with other group members/Oxfam.

In addition to your own written communications, there are professionally produced publications available from Oxfam. Bear in mind that if your members receive information directly from us.

Attracting new members and keeping existing members interested.

- Ask yourself what the Group wants to do more of. What new skills are needed to achieve this?
- Think about why a potential new recruit might want to join the Group. What sorts of activities might they want to take part in? What might they want to achieve?
- Materials – a general leaflet describing the Group's activities might be the right answer; or perhaps a sign-up sheet at your events. Consider Where you will advertise, and to whom? What is likely to appeal to your chosen audience? What is the effect of the language you use in your materials?

You could invite new members to a Group meeting, campaigning activity, or social event.

Try to ensure people will feel positive about what they can achieve, and know what action they can take next.

Finances

It is Oxfam's policy that volunteers may claim expenses reasonably incurred in the course of their activities on Oxfam's behalf. What expenses may be claimed is set out in Oxfam's *Volunteering Policy*:

www.oxfam.org.uk/get_involved/volunteer/policy

Your Group may raise funds as well as campaigning. It is not legitimate simply to use the money you raise from the public to fund your campaigning activities, although a proportion of the funds you raise may be used to cover expenses. This is because Oxfam has a duty to account to the public for all the funds raised, and to explain how they are used. Oxfam's auditors require us to provide information on all our financial activities, including the activities of Oxfam Groups. Further details of how to deal with legitimate expenses are contained in the *Financial Guidelines for Groups*. Your Treasurer should already have a copy of these.

Suggestions for fundraising activities can be found in the *Oxfam fundraising kit*:

<http://www.oxfam.org.uk/fundraise>