



Setting up a Meeting

So...you're tired of trying to fit into the community and school youth groups that don't speak to you or interest you a heck of a lot. So...why not kick-start your own group and take some action on issues that are important to YOU? Here are some helpful hints on setting up a meeting for your group:

1. Organize a school or community meeting to get other people interested and involved. Pick a place: it could be your house, at school, a public library, or a community centre. Make sure it is wheelchair accessible, in a well-lit area, close to public transit (if you have public transit in your area).
2. Set a time when most people can probably come – e.g. after school, after work, lunchtime or a weekend.
3. Get the word out! Send a notice over email lists and to your friends, put up posters, make an announcement over the P.A., phone up people.
4. Set an agenda. Make a list of items you need to discuss and take action on. If possible, make copies of the agenda and/or post it up somewhere in the meeting room. It might look something like this:

AGENDA

1. **Check-In:** Welcome everyone and let them know what you have planned for the evening. Pass around a sign-in sheet to get names, phone numbers & emails. If people don't know each other, go around the room and ask people to introduce themselves & why they're here. If they know each other already, this can be a time to share what ideas they have to bring to the meeting & what they want to discuss. Ask someone to be a 'minute-taker' and make notes about everything being said.
2. **Set some group rules** that everyone should try to follow. Examples: Do not interrupt people when speaking; Make sure people from marginalized backgrounds have time to speak.
3. **Brainstorm some ideas** for a project the group could take on. It's good to have a project so that you have a clear goal to work towards.
4. **Make an action plan!** Make a list of everything that needs to get done, and when it has to be done by. Have different people responsible for different tasks. Decide what you want to have done for the next meeting.
5. **Set a time & place** for your next meeting.
6. **Check out:** Go around the room again & ask people if they have anything else to say - any questions or comments.

5. You will probably act as facilitator for this first meeting. That doesn't mean you'll be ordering people around, but you will be making sure that everyone sticks to the agenda & doesn't go off topic, and that you stick to a time limit. You should also make sure that people in dominant roles –e.g. white males – don't dominate the whole discussion, so that people in marginalized positions –e.g. women of colour – feel safe and are able to speak. See the **Facilitation** page for more info.

