

Building effective local alliances

Why build alliances?

- You might not have the capacity to do it alone.
- You can have a far greater influence.
- You can reach a different audience – not just preaching to the converted.
- It can be more fun!

What alliances can be formed?

The alliances you form depend on what possibilities are available in your area and what your aims are. The following groups and individuals might provide you with ideas for local partnerships.

Groups: For example, Amnesty International, Trade Justice Movement, Greenpeace, People and Planet groups, church groups, other volunteer groups.

Institutions: local library or gallery, colleges, local companies, local councils, Government offices, Regional Development Agencies, local branches of national unions, for example Unison, GMB, TGWU.

Individuals: MP/MEP, Councillor, or a celebrity – a local sports star or radio personality perhaps.

You can research local alliances on the web or over the phone. Use your town website (e.g. www.brighton.co.uk) or local green/development or volunteer directories – libraries are a great place to start.

What can you do as part of an alliance?

It is up to you. Sometimes it is good to approach an ally with a really easy thing to do and go from there. Or you can offer a few options, including some bigger things to do. Ideas include:

- A joint press release on an issue, or a joint letter to the Editor of your local newspaper.
- Writing a piece for a newsletter or journal.
- A joint media stunt.
- An event, talk or fundraising activity.
- A stall on a shared issue in a town centre, fair or carnival.
- Getting more signatures, even high profile ones, on a letter to a local influential person, for example, an MP or the Chief Executive of a local company.
- Produce joint materials.

Getting things started

Are there any events or conferences locally where potential allies are likely to be present? Bring along contact details that you can give to potential allies. Or you could invite people along to a group meeting or an event that has already been organised.

It can be extremely rewarding to work with other people with different approaches and ideas – and, of course, more hands make lighter work. Investing time and effort usually pays dividends, particularly if you have a long-term approach. Building up a range of local networks and contacts will put you in a strong position for the future.