

# 10 steps to Starting a STAR group



So you've decided to start your own STAR group? Brilliant!

To help you get going here are some key things you need to do or think about.

- ★ **Contact STAR National.** If you haven't already, then get in touch with Maddy Robinson (Student Network Coordinator) to find out more about what STAR groups do and how you can get started.
- ★ **Speak to your Students' Union.** You must be a registered student society to be part of the STAR network. Contact the person responsible for societies (e.g. Societies Officer) and find out what you need to do to set up a society and what support the Union can provide for your new group.
- ★ **Form your society committee.** You need to appoint people to the positions required by your Students' Union and any other roles necessary to take responsibility for other tasks you may have. This will sometimes be a formal election with a Union representative present, particularly if you have a large number of people to begin with. However, it may be more appropriate to have an informal meeting where positions are agreed by consensus, especially if this is considered provisional and you intend to hold open elections later in the year.
- ★ **Register your society.** You will usually need to collect some signatures (around 15-30 but check your SU regulations) and get at least 3 people to agree to be on the new committee (minimum is usually Chair, Treasurer, Secretary). You may need to wait before the Union confirm your registration.

**What do Student Union Societies get?** Depends on your uni but most likely some or all of the following:

1. Added to list of societies so students know you're there!
2. Funding for your group
3. Advertising opportunities at society events, including Freshers' Fair
4. Free training and advice on basic aspects of running a student group from Student Union officers
5. Access to university facilities (e.g. room bookings) and equipment

- ★ **Affiliate to the STAR network.** To become a STAR group you must affiliate to the STAR network. Ask STAR National for a copy of the Affiliation Agreement for you to check, sign and return to officially become a new STAR group!
- ★ **Hold your first meeting.** Get together those who are interested to plan your first steps, including getting more members and organising your first events or activities.
- ★ **Promote your group!** The first thing you'll need is members, and plenty of them. You need to make sure that as many people on campus know that there is a STAR group at their university. Here is what to do..
  - Book a stall at Freshers' Fair. This is the best opportunity to recruit members, but at other times of the year there may be a 'Re-Freshers Fair' or volunteering fairs.

- Link up with similar societies to share what you're doing and talk about ways to work together.
- Start a Facebook group and Twitter page. An easy way to build support among friends and advertise your group and activities.
- Attending university events. Check the Union Diary for events such as "One World Festivals" and "International Weeks" which you could book stalls at and/or organise events for.
- Contacting relevant departments. See if you can advertise on departmental notice boards or contact lecturers and departments who you think may have a natural fit with your group's aims and interests. They can send out e-mails or might let you give a talk/hand out leaflets in their lectures.

★ **Get your STAR resource pack.** Ask STAR National for a box of lovely materials, including a banner, leaflets, stickers, beer mats, balloons, refugee leaflets, campaign info and more!

★ **Organise your first public events.** Kick start your group by holding an introductory evening open to all students, and remember, advertising your event is key! A member of the STAR National team will be happy to come and speak.

A number of different events will work, e.g. a short talk, a film and quiz, or a music night. Whatever you do try to keep it simple and make sure that people leave with some basic info about STAR and refugees and a clear idea of how to get more involved. This could be part of a presentation, or through brief announcements, or leaflets handed at the door.

★ **Find local volunteering opportunities.** STAR National can help you find local refugee projects and organisations to volunteer with. Get in touch with Emily Crowley, STAR Deputy Director, to discuss what you're interested in doing.