

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL



Young Lions Media Competition

Background information

About us

Amnesty International is a Nobel Peace Prize winning movement of over 7 million people globally standing up against human rights abuses.

From defending the rights of refugees, to promoting women's rights around the world, to campaigning against arms trading to responding to crisis situations around the world, Amnesty's power is in its ability to give the tools to change the world to the individual.

As a brand, Amnesty is Compassionate, Outspoken, Powerful, Committed and Expert. We are outspoken and brave, but effective and reliable too.

Political and Cultural Context

This year, from the USA to Hungary, the United Kingdom to the Philippines, leaders and political movements are openly peddling dangerous rhetoric that implies some people are less human than others.

We have seen this kind of divisive and toxic politics before. But if we are to learn any lesson from history, it is that we cannot remain silent in the face of these trends. Human rights abusers often depend on a small group to carry out their dirty work, and rely on the rest of us to stay silent and keep out of their way. Yet even in the darkest moments of history, brave individuals have stood in their way. Amnesty says - if you want to make a difference: get in the way.

Besides the rise of hateful rhetoric this year, Amnesty International tells another story – one of resistance. In every corner of the world, people are taking a stand - confronting governments and holding them to account. Taking a stand doesn't have to be standing in front of a tank – taking a stand can be small acts of human solidarity.

This brief seeks to inspire individuals to become activists in simple ways.

The Brief

Get millennials to take part in our 'Write for Rights' campaign (we run it annually. Write for Rights is an internal title but need not be used externally).

We want them to write to human rights abuse victims around the world.

We want them to see that changing the world doesn't have to start with toppling governments or scrapping laws, it could start with a letter to someone that needs to hear that they aren't fighting for change alone.

Our experience shows us that these letters do make a difference

Every year Amnesty supporters globally get in the way – they write letters to other people who are getting in the way.

After 44 years in solitary confinement on 19 February 2016, his 69th birthday, Albert Woodfox walked free. Of the letters he received from Amnesty supporters he said, "These messages from beyond the prison walls have

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become an enormous source of strength for me as I continue my fight for freedom". 200,000 people globally wrote messages for Albert through this campaign in 2015.

Costas from Athens who was brutally beaten in a homophobic attack in Greece received 150,000 letters from Amnesty supporters in 2015. He said, "this is what I think the letters from all over the world stand for: that all love is equal, and it must be seen as nothing else under any circumstances. Your letters remind us we are not alone in this... Thank you"

In Burma Phyo Phyo Aung was arrested with other students at a peaceful protest. She was another person Amnesty supporters wrote to in 2015. She said, "Receiving letters gives me real inspiration... Your letters are not just letters, they are also big presents and great strength not only for the students but also for Burma's future."

Competitive Context

Amnesty's primary action takers and fundraisers tend to be significantly older than the millennial audience. We're testing ways to drive engagement with this younger audience all the time.

In our experience so far, millennials don't give to organisations, they support causes. When they do donate, they donate impulsively. We find that the younger audiences also tend to be more actively concerned with where their money is going or what their actions are achieving – we have to very clearly explain how we think we can make change happen to engage them successfully.

Challenge

To effect human rights change at the scale we need to, we need to grow our movement in the UK. Our research says that one of the best directions to grow in for us is to reach more Millennials.

One of our most successful campaigns, which we run annually, is our letter-writing campaign. It's a campaign where impact is personal and massive.

We know Millennials want to change the world, and we have a really effective tool for changing people's worlds - but we haven't been able to put those two things together.

Target Audience

Politically left-leaning Gen Y-ers. We call them our Young Optimists. They're not necessarily 'hard' left-wing activists, but they are reasonably open to human rights friendly views. They're typical of the demographic and are seeking self-actualisation; they want to engage on their own terms. We find them to be really sociable, we see that in their behaviours; the majority of this group tend to engage with charities and causes when they see their friends and networks are doing it too. They are seeking knowledge; they don't have a lot of social justice knowledge to back up their opinions, but they want to be experts and have trend-setting opinions. They are idealists and are marked by a passionate belief that given the right tools, they can change the world for the better – and we tend to agree.

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Campaign objective

We want to increase action taking. We want a campaign that inspires a new generation of caring activists. And at the same time we want them to redefine activism for themselves – we want them to see that some of the biggest changes are small changes. You can fight for human rights by writing a letter and supporting someone who's also fighting for human rights.

Basically we want to:

- Increase number of millennials writing letters
- Increase number of personalised messages written by millennials

But success for this campaign is not as simple as getting someone out of prison for example, though these actions can certainly lead to that. Our broader campaign objective is about solidarity.

Letters written to human rights defenders:

- Give them strength and hope in their own campaigns for justice
- Shine a spotlight on the case, which gives them protection, often securing positive changes to their conditions
- Highlights their case and makes it more difficult for abuses to continue

Key message

Write a letter, change a life

No-Nos:

- We can't use religious messaging or imagery. So, despite the time of year, we can't talk about Christmas or writing Christmas cards.

Budget

Circa £15,000

Timeline

The campaign runs from 1 November to 31 December 2017

KPIs

- Total 250,000 actions taken in the AIUK – with data capture (2016 we hit approx. 152,000)
- General increase in Young Optimist action taking (2016 not measured accurately, but low)