

5 simple steps to start your own local group, or community of practice:

### 1. Define your geographical area.

- Your area could be a country, a province, a State, a city, or a neighborhood or section of town (like SOHO).
- Check to see if there are already regional organizers near you, through the AIN Regional Groups page and by emailing the organizer shepherder of your geographic area ([Patricia Colley](#) for North America, [Sue Walden](#) for the rest of the world)
- Take into account how many people you think you can attract, given what you know about members of AIN who may be nearby, how far people will be willing to travel, and whether there may be issues with languages if your group is going to cross borders.

### 2. Create your local group

Create a regional group on the AIN practitioner site (this site). Some people find it useful to create a group on Facebook too.

- If you need help creating a group on the AIN site (Ning) please contact [Renatus](#).
- if you are creating a virtual community of practice, don't create it as "regional" group. The AIN is planning to change the website to accommodate these groups. Stay tuned, as changes are planned in the next year. In the meantime, you can do all the other things we suggest on this page.
- If you're creating a Facebook group, do a search for AIN or Applied Improv on Facebook first, to see what other groups are out there. Name your group something similar to what others are using (for example "Applied Improvisation Tucson" or "Applied Improv for Business").

### 3. Connect with your local tribe.

- Reach out to potential group members (members of AIN website and all people in your personal networks). For relevant location information on AIN members please contact [appliedimprovnetwork@gmail.com](mailto:appliedimprovnetwork@gmail.com) who can pull that from the AIN (Ning) website.
- Help people find you. Make your group known by communicating on social media, by writing articles etc. Any events you create for your local AIN group will probably be featured on our community website – that is, they will be listed in advance on the home page, giving them prominence.

### 4. Set up your first gathering.

- **If you already have an inspiration for an event, go ahead and make a bold offer!** You don't need permission or consensus to put an event on the calendar yourself. All you need is an idea you love, and a location to host it. There are many public places where you can host an event for free.
- **If you're not sure what to do for a first event, invite your local AIN colleagues to a planning meeting.**
- Discuss what works and what things are important in this particular area and to this group of AINers.

- You can set up a discussion in email, on the AIN website, or on Facebook, or meet at a coffee shop, or have a conference call. Invite people you know who are interested, or email out to the list that AIN provided to you.
- If it's a big list, you may need to use a bulk email service like Mailchimp.
- If you plan to set up a Facebook group, do that first, so you can share that link.
- Focus on connecting to the practitioners in your area, and finding out what people want.
- Make contact with other groups in your area whose interests and work overlap with your local membership.

For example, Organizational Development professionals, professional facilitators, academics or business consultants may be interested in teaming up, participating or presenting at an AIN event, or hosting AIN related events for their membership as well.

- Some event ideas that have worked for others:
  - Game swaps are a popular way to get a group started.
  - Professional development sessions also work well. Connect with a range of experts in your area, and invite them to do an evening lecture and demo.
  - Theme-based events can be on any topic you like, and structured as presentations, panel discussions, interactive demos, participatory working sessions, or even informal conversations.
  - Informal discussion or topical events can be had over coffee, snacks or even a happy hour mixer.
  - Plan events around visits of other AIN members.
  - Plan a recap event of the annual conference to share highlights or have locals encore their own sessions.
  - Weekend mini-conference with a series of lectures, demos, socializing and game shares. Connect people with locals to offer accommodations for those traveling in for the event.

## **5. Connect with your fellow organizers to share inspirations!**

- Contact [Patricia Colley](#) to put your name on the North American Regional Organizer group mailing list, or [Sue Walden](#) for other parts of the world.
- Regional Organizers in the US and Canada now have their own FB page to share discussions, announcements and knowledge! [AIN North American Regional Organizer Facebook page](#)
- Event planning documents and reports may be shared on Google Docs, through the organizer mailing list.