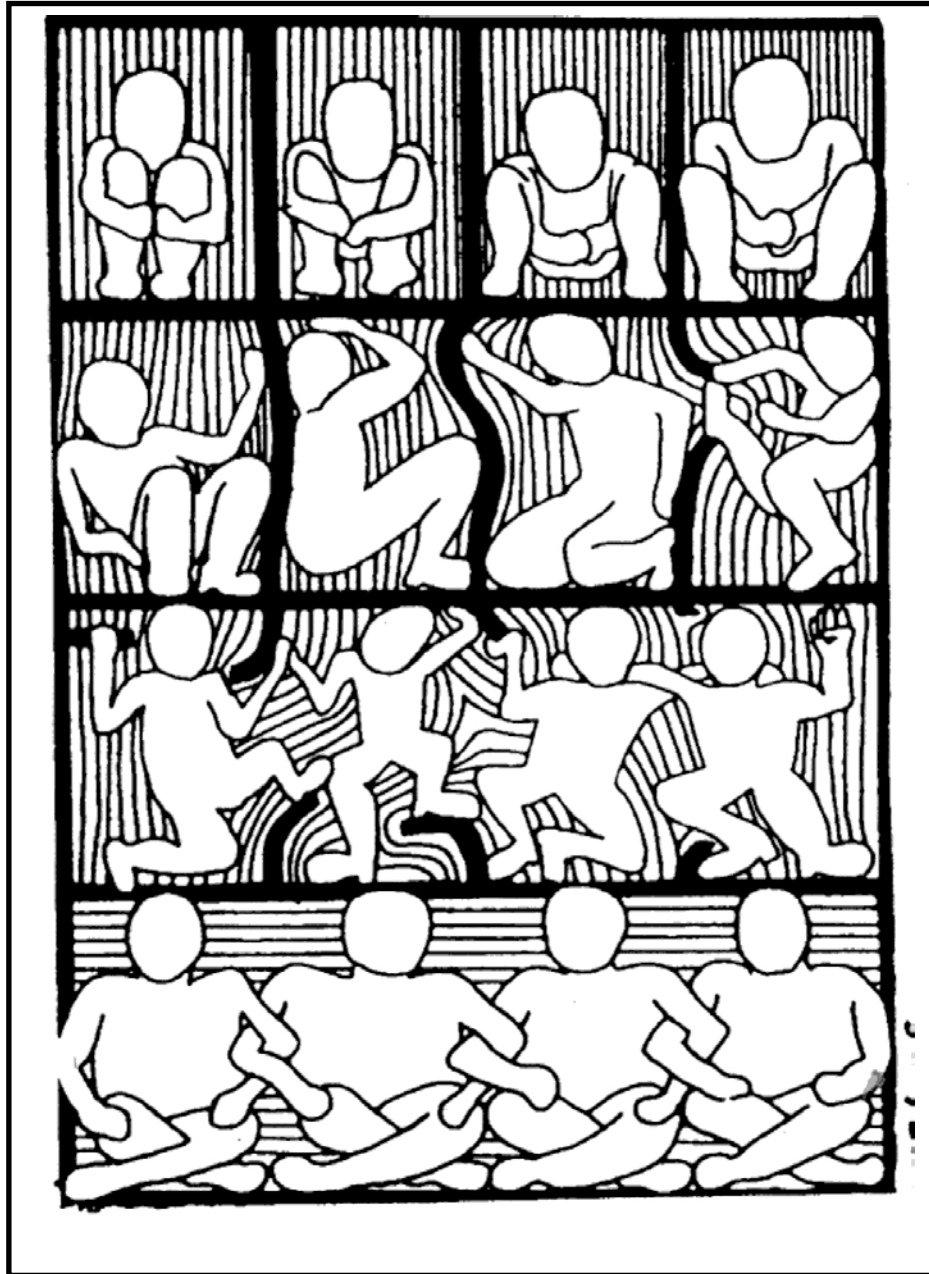


Basic

Community Organizing

Bringing the Community's Voice to the Policy Table



"I, for one believe that if you give people a thorough understanding of what confronts them and the basic causes that produce it, they'll create their own program, and when the people create a program, you get action." Malcolm X

January 2010

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15 LESSONS I LEARNED FROM ORGANIZING

6/25/1997

1. **Mobilizing is hard but organizing is harder. Organizing is labor intensive and there are no shortcuts.**
2. **Organizing is a slow process and efforts that allow the issue to overshadow building organization dissipate after the issue is won or lost.**
3. **Nothing works like following the classic steps in organizing**
4. **One must be persistent and always keep one's eyes on the prize.**
5. **Outsiders can't organize insiders. Empowerment is an "I" word.**
6. **The people know what is best for the people.**
7. **There is no such thing as apathy.**
8. **Someone is only leader if s/he has followers.**
9. **Where you stand depends on where you sit. Ethnicity, gender, social class, etc. matter.**
10. **History counts.**
11. **If there are mediating institutions, use them. If there aren't, build them.**
12. **Power is never given.**
13. **If you don't ask, the answer is NO!**
14. **Know the root cause of the problem before you design the solution.**
15. **If you want to know why, ask "Who benefits?"**



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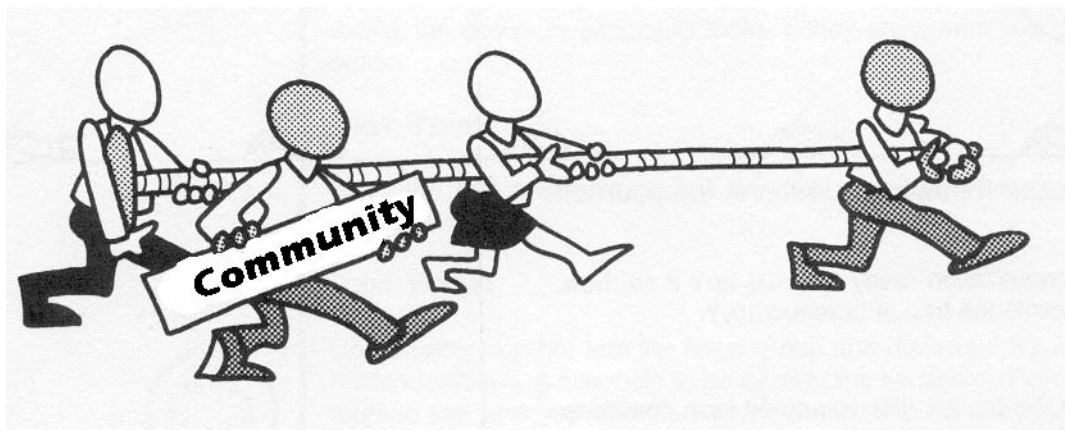
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(By Paul Watson, Jr., MSHS)



WHY WE ORGANIZE:

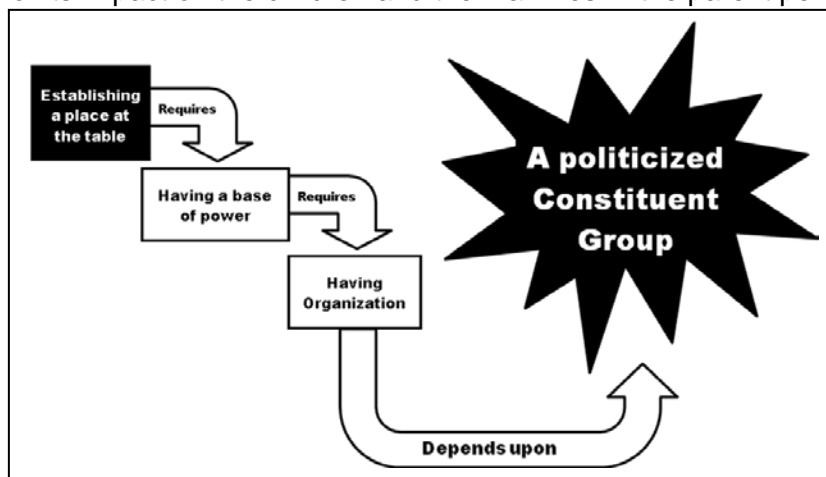
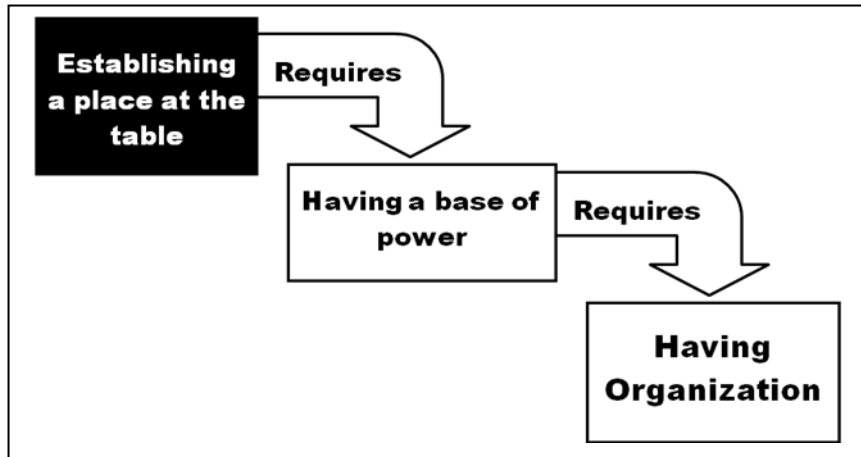
The ultimate goal of organizing is to ensure that you have a **“place at the table.”** Being at the table means you have an equal voice in the policy decisions that affect your community. As this diagram shows, having a voice at the table requires having a base of power that only comes when you are organized. To be a legitimate voice for the community, however, this organization

must be made up of members of the community and be constituent/member led. For example, suppose the local School

Department is considering changing the elementary school in your community from a traditional, nine month schedule to a year round schedule. Who should be involved in making that decision? Parents are often not **“at**

the table” when this type of

decision is made, yet it has a huge impact on their lives. If parents are to influence that decision, they must have some power within the School Department. This power can only come from an organization of parents who can articulate the parents’ perspective on the issue. If the parents aren’t organized then the School Department has no place to consult for the parents’ perspective and the decision is made based on the needs of the School Department regardless of its impact on the children and their families. If the parent perspective is to be considered in



the decision, then they must be **at the table** when the decision is made, and the parents at the table must be legitimate representatives of the parents’ in the community. The authority to speak for the parents can only come from the parents themselves through their organization.

If the ultimate goal is to build an organization that can legitimately speak for the community, then that

organization must reach out and build a politicized constituency group. A **“politicized constituent group”** is simply a group of people who are aware of what is going on in their community and are able to participate in that community in a way that contributes to creating and articulating the “resident voice.”

We organize in order to raise the residents’ voice and to bring that voice to the policy table.

HOW WE ORGANIZE:

Before discussing how to organize, it is important to be clear about what we mean by “Politics.” All too often, people define “politics” as voting or being involved in political campaigns. While, these activities are a part of politics, they are only a small part. Politics is the art of translating the ideal into the real, raising the question, ***who gets to define the ideal?*** Politics is the way

Politics is not just about elections. It is the art of translating the ideal into the real.

you bring your vision of the ideal to the policy table where it gets translated into policy or the “real.” There are many voices at the policy table, all competing to have their vision defined as the “ideal” and therefore control the policy. The stronger the resident voice, the greater influence it will have at that policy table. The

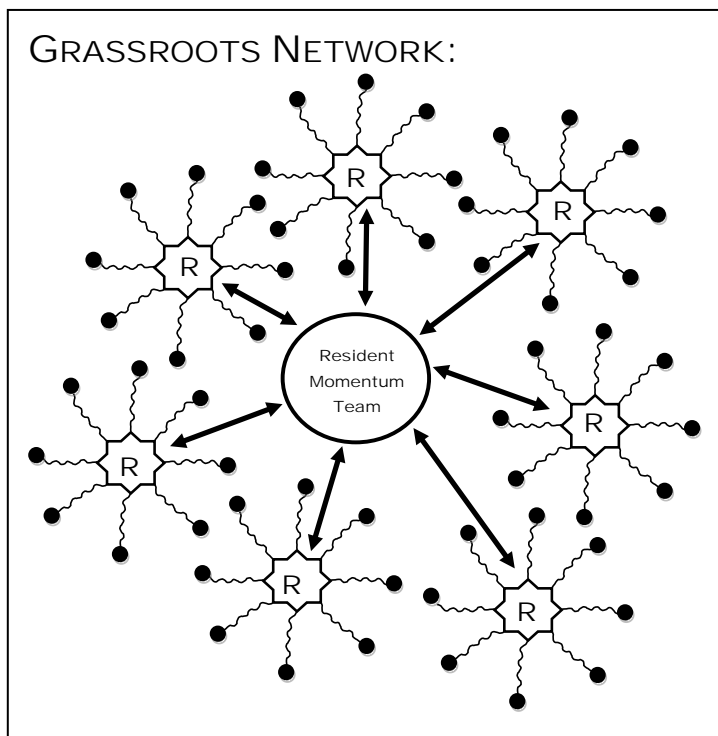
stronger the resident voice, the closer the “real” or policies will reflect the residents’ view of the “ideal.”

Developing a “Politicized Constituency”

If the resident organization is to have power at the policy table, it must have an informed base in the community, a base that is ready and able to come together to raise its voice. The role of the organization is build that informed base, that is a network of people who are informed and engaged in a dialogue about what is important to the community and what should be happening in the community. The figure to the right provides a view of what this network might look like. Members of the Resident Momentum (or any grassroots organization) take responsibility to reach out to other residents within their community who, in turn, have their own networks that they can reach out to.

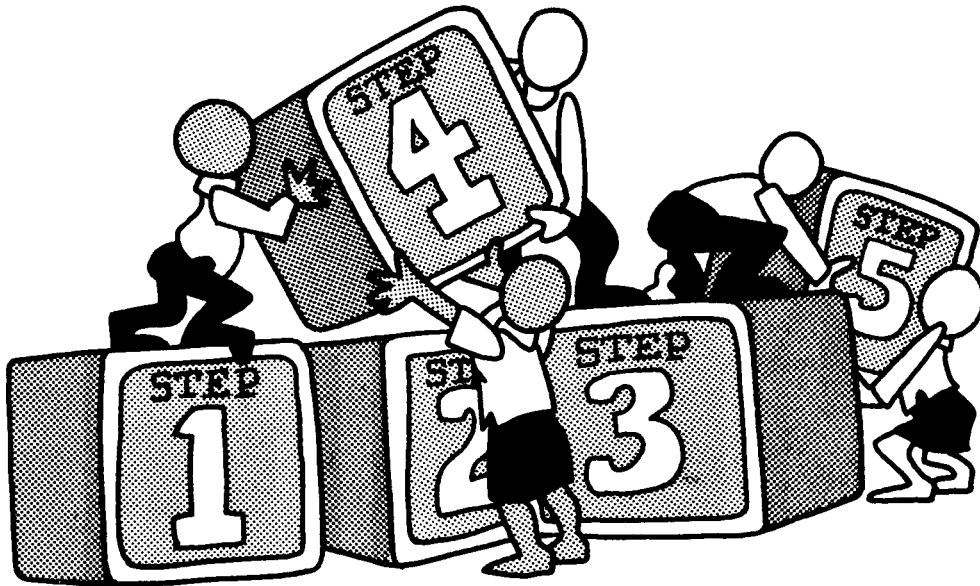
In this view, people can engage the process at different levels. Some people will become very engaged and want to help build the organization, others will be interested reaching out and sharing information with others, and some will only want to receive the information. Members of the Resident

Momentum Team have the responsibility for building the organization by identifying people within their network of people who can and will take responsibility for passing the information on and having a dialogue with people in their own network about what is important and what should be done within the community. The people in the inner circle pass on information to and discuss issues with the people in their network, the Rs. The Rs then take the information and discuss it with the people within their network. The outcome of these discussions then gets communicated back to the Resident Momentum Team members who use it to formulate the resident perspective that is to be represented at the policy table.



ORGANIZING TOOLS

- **Organizing a Successful Meeting**
 - **Planning Meeting Checklist**
 - **Meeting Checklist**
- **Organizing a Successful Campaign**
- **Leadership Development**
- **Consensus Decision Making**
- **Sustainability**



ORGANIZING A SUCCESSFUL MEETING

There are four steps to having a successful meeting. These are: Planning, Outreach, The Meeting, and Follow-up. Each step has a set of tasks that must be taken care of.

1. **Planning:** It all begins with the key leadership coming together to complete the following tasks:

a. Step 1: Be clear on why people are meeting

- i. Develop a clear statement of the purpose of the meeting
- ii. Develop a clear statement of expected/desired outcome of the meeting

b. Step 2: Develop the agenda

- i. What needs to be covered based on purpose & expected/desired outcome?
- ii. How long will each item take?
- iii. Roles:
 1. Who will lead on each item?
 2. Who will keep the time?
 3. Who will monitor the process?
 4. Who will take notes?

Tip: Be realistic about time. Remember no meeting starts exactly on time and most items take longer than we expect. Finishing on time is a sign of respect for those attending the meeting.

c. Step 3: Arrange the logistics

- i. Set the location and time
- ii. What materials are needed for the meeting (e.g., agendas, sign-in sheets, etc.) and who is responsible for translation and production?
- iii. What are the arrangements for room access and setup and who is responsible for it?
- iv. What are the arrangements for Childcare and who is responsible for it?
- v. What are the arrangements for Interpretation and who is responsible for it?
- vi. What are the arrangements for Food and who is responsible for it?
- vii. Other

d. Step 4: Outreach

- i. Who needs to be at the meeting?
- ii. How do we get them to the meeting?
- iii. Who will do what?
- iv. How many people?
- v. Who will coordinate?

2. **Organizing:**

- a. Who/when will prepare and distribute Fliers/Announcements/Email Blasts?
- b. Who/when will construct and/or activate the phone tree?
- c. Who/when will be making personal contacts & to whom?
- d. Who/when will do the follow-up and reminders?
- e. Who & how is it being coordinated?

Tip: At best 1 out of 100 will come because they saw a flier/email; 1 out of 20 will come from a phone call; 1 out of 10 will come because someone spoke to them personally; 1 out of 3 will come if you speak to them and then remind them.

3. **The Meeting:**

a. Space

- i. Check on meeting room setup
- ii. Check on child care space
- iii. Check on food setup

- b. Meeting Materials:
 - i. Agendas, Past Minutes, Handouts, etc. set out
 - ii. Translation equipment ready
 - iii. Laptop/projector ready
 - iv. Flipchart/White Board re
 - v. Markers
 - vi. Other
- c. Other Materials:
 - 1. Coffee, tea, water
 - 2. Plates, cups, silverware
 - 3. Children/Youth
 - a. Arts & Crafts
 - b. Books, Videos, Games, etc.
- d. During the meeting: (See: "Tips for Facilitating the Meetings")
 - i. Keep track of time
 - ii. Monitor the agenda
 - iii. Monitor the process [who speaks, who doesn't speak, body language, coming-going, side conversations, etc.]
 - iv. Monitor the energy [high, low, positive, hostile, negative, bored, etc.]
 - v. Name tasks & expectations for next steps and next meeting
- e. After meeting:
 - i. Debrief: If possible, the key leadership responsible for the meeting should meet briefly right after the meeting to see how each felt about the meeting.

4. Follow-up:

- a. Debrief: The key leadership should meet within a week after the meeting to share their perspectives and critique the meeting with each other. This task can be addressed at the next planning meeting.
- b. Identify activists & emerging leaders: People will engage at different levels. Who were the people at the meeting who seemed excited by the issues, were highly engaged in the discussion, had good ideas, and/or volunteered to take on some of the tasks?
- c. Contact activists & emerging leaders: The people who get listed as activists and/or emerging leaders should be contacted within a week to ten days after the meeting for a debriefing. What was their perspective on the meeting? Were they pleased with the outcome? How do they feel the group is doing? Where do they see themselves in the group? Is there a specific role they want to play – or – gift they have to contribute?
- d. Contact absentees: Sometime before the next meeting, the people who were expected to come, but did not should be contacted to let them know that they were missed, what happened at the meeting and what the next steps are. This conversation should end with sharing your hope/expectation that they will be at the next meeting

PLANNING MEETING CHECKLIST

Step 1: Why we are meeting?

- Debrief from last meeting if necessary
- Purpose of meeting
- Expected/Desired outcomes

Step 2: What are we going to do?

- Agenda items
- Time allotment
- Roles
 - Facilitators
 - Time Keeper
 - Process Monitors
 - Note taker

Step 3: Logistics:

- Location & Time
- Meeting Materials [agendas, sign-in sheets, past minutes, handouts, etc.]
- Child care
- Interpretation
- Food
- Other: _____

Step 4: Who is going to be there?

- Identify who needs to be at the meeting
- Identify outreach strategies
- Identify who will do the outreach
- Set a target number of people for the meeting

MEETING CHECKLIST

Space:

- Room set up
- Childcare space
- Food layout

Meeting Materials:

- Agendas
- Past Minutes
- Handouts
- Translation Equipment
- Laptop/projector (if needed)
- Flipchart/White Board
- Markers
- Other: _____

Other Supports:

- Coffee/Tea/Water
- Plates/cups/silverware
- Children/Youth
 - Arts & Crafts
 - Books, Videos, Games, Etc
 - Other: _____

ORGANIZING A SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN

A Campaign is a 3 to 12 month effort focused on a specific issue to achieve a specific outcome. For example, a neighborhood group wants the City to collect garbage twice a week instead of once a week. To achieve this goal or outcome, the group decides to launch a campaign to increase garbage collection in their neighborhood. A campaign provides the organization with a very specific focus for a specific amount of time.

A Campaign is also a recruitment tool. It provides an opportunity to talk to people who are concerned about the issue the campaign is focused on, like trash in the alleyways. It also provides an opportunity to introduce them to what your organization is doing and how they can get involved. Self-interest is the most powerful force in community organizing. People get involved when the organization is working on issues that affect their lives. A campaign such as the example here would draw in people concerned about trash, property values, rodents, health, etc. Some of the people who join the campaign on garbage collection will stay with the organization and work on additional campaigns. The people who stay engaged are the emerging leadership while the others become part of the information and outreach network.

A campaign gives people an opportunity to:

- 1) **Engage in the public dialogue:** By bringing an issue to the community at a grassroots level, you bring a deeper and broader slice of the community into the discussion on how the issue should be addressed. This dialogue is the basis for articulating the resident perspective at the policy table.
- 2) **Engage in the push & pull of power and politics:** As a legitimate voice of the residents, the campaign puts you at the policy table where the politics of power are played out. It is here that the “ideal” gets defined and then translated into the “real.” The strength of the resident voice at this table is directly related to the strength of the resident organization.
- 3) **Get firsthand look at how “powers that be” see your constituency:** While residents themselves are rarely at the policy table, there are many there who claim to speak for residents, e.g., elected officials, nonprofit organizations, County employees, etc. By having a seat at the table, residents are able to speak for themselves, often presenting a perspective on community needs that is quite different from that which exists.

A Campaign goes through 5 step process. These steps are:

Defining the Issue
Researching the Issue
Planning the Campaign
Taking Action
Evaluation & Reflection

Campaigns create the opportunity for people to become politicized

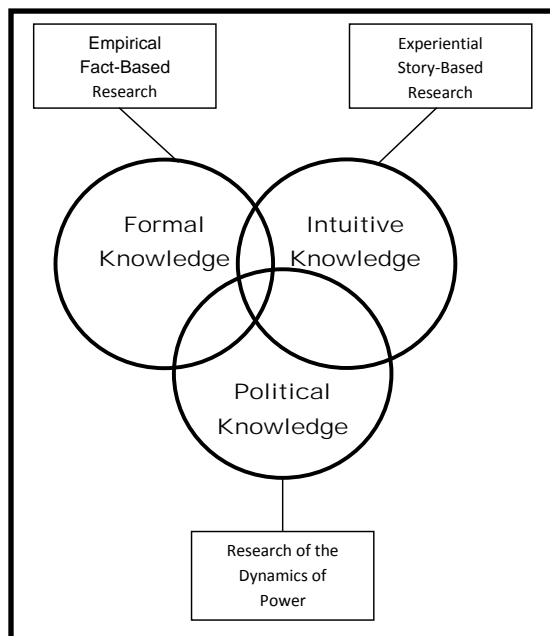
STEP 1: DEFINING THE ISSUE:

A good issue statement is a simple, clear statement of the community's concern that does not suggest a solution. Using the garbage example from above the issue statement might be: "An unhealthy amount of garbage is collecting in the alleyways." A good organizing campaign begins by people bringing the issue to their network to see if they are concerned about it and what they think should be done about it. *Defining the issue is critical because how you define the problem dictates what you are likely to propose as the solution.* It is important not to suggest solutions to the problem too early in the process because you want solutions to emerge from the dialogue. As they emerge, the organizer's job is to present them back to the community. If people recognize their voice in the proposed solution to the issue, they are more likely to join the organization. Once the issue and ideas for solutions have been identified, the organization is ready to move into the second step in the process.

How you define the problem dictates what you do as the solution.

A Good Issue is: 1) Something people really care about; 2) Something that is easily explained [in less than 2 minutes]; and, 3) People are willing to take action about it.

A Good Issue has a HOOK. Most often we are asking the hardest working, busiest, and most stressed people in the community to join us in the campaign. There has to be a good reason to add the work of this campaign to their already overloaded schedule. The "Hook" is the way the issue is presented in order to get people interested. It should have both intellectual and emotional appeal. Again, using the garbage example, the hook might be, "Tired of the health of your children being threatened by the garbage in the alleyways? Protect our children and join the effort to get the City to clean up our alleyways!"



STEP 2: RESEARCH:

Successful campaigns begin with research. Once we know what the issue is and what people see as the solution, research can begin. As this diagram indicates, there are three bases of knowledge that must be researched. These are formal, intuitive, and political. These require research that is fact-based, story-based, and focused on power respectively. In particular:

Formal: What are the prevailing theories to explain the situation and the problem? What are the demographics? Have there been other interventions – if yes – how and what outcome? This knowledge general comes from professional journals, government reports, foundations, think tanks, etc. In the garbage example, it might include a review of studies that link garbage in alleyways to

increases in childhood asthma, increased in rodent attacks on small children, etc. This research would provide support for the argument for more garbage collections.

Intuitive: How are people experiencing the situation/problem? What do they see as cause & solution? What are they willing to do? This knowledge can only come from talking to people

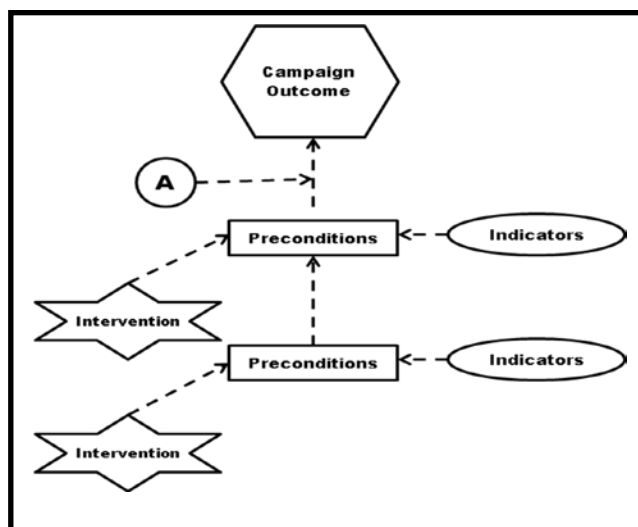
and documenting their perspective in a systematic way. This research can be done in a range of ways from a series of informal one-on-one conversations with people throughout the community to a formal Participatory Action Research Project where the leadership does their own formal study of the issue – from the residents’ perspective.

Political: Who has the authority to make the changes and where does that authority come from? How do they use it? Who has a voice in the process? How do you influence the process? This knowledge comes from doing a Community Power Analysis that identifies where the power lies within the community, what the source and base of their power are, and what motivates the person/office to act as it does (See the Community Power Analysis in the appendix).

STEP 3: PLANNING:

In organizing a campaign it is important to keep the focus as narrow as possible. The issue statement should stand as the basis for the resident position and help to define the **campaign outcome**. The goal of the planning process is to develop a **Theory of Change** that will direct the campaign toward the desired outcome. The process starts with a statement of the desired campaign outcome and works backward from there. This campaign outcome must be stated in very concrete and specific terms so it can be certain that all members know what the organization wants to achieve and if it has achieved it or not. In the garbage example, the residents decided that garbage collection twice a week was the desired campaign outcome. This is a good outcome because it is easily measured. Either the garbage is collected twice a week or it is not. In contrast, if the outcome were stated as “Cleaner alleyways,” it might never be clear if the residents achieved their desired outcome. The City could claim that the alleyways were cleaner while the residents could claim the opposite. “Cleaner alleyways” is a vague term that can be disputed. “Garbage collection twice a week,” however, is not vague and whether it is being done is not debatable.

Having defined the desired outcome(s), the organization then develops the Theory of Change. The diagram presented here gives a simple view of a Theory of Change (see appendix for a more detailed look). Again, creating the plan starts with defining the **campaign outcome** in very concrete and measurable terms. Once the outcome is defined, the next step is to define the **preconditions** required for that outcome to be achieved. Preconditions are what must happen before and in order for the campaign outcome to be achieved. Like the campaign outcome, these preconditions must also be stated in



concrete and measurable terms. As can be seen in the simplified Theory of Change diagram, there is a precondition to a precondition. If garbage collection twice a week is the campaign outcome, then there must be adjustments in the Public Works Department budget to cover the cost of the extra collections. This budget adjustment would need approval from someone in City Government, i.e., the Mayor’s office. The planning process requires that the group name the full chain of preconditions that need to be met in order to achieve the campaign outcome.

As the diagram indicates, there is a potential **intervention** for every precondition. The intervention is what the organization must do in order to achieve the precondition. Once the precondition is known, the organization can identify the interventions, what needs to be done to create the preconditions that lead to the desired outcome. It is the interventions that make up the work of the campaign. The Theory of Change tells us what needs to be accomplished and in what order. For example, in order to get the Public Works Department Budget adjusted we first need the support of the Mayor. In order to get support for the Mayor we must get several City Councilors to support the campaign. The intervention is what the organization does to win the support of the City Councilor. The plan consists of laying out the steps for achieving the campaign outcome.

As the plan is developed, it is important to understand the **assumptions** (indicated as “A” in the diagram) being made about the connection between the precondition and the campaign outcome. In the example, the residents are assuming that the unhealthy amounts of garbage in the alleyways due to the neighborhood being too densely populated to be adequately served by one garbage collection. Therefore, one precondition for attaining the outcome of garbage collection twice a week is increasing the resources in the Public Works Department.

Lastly, the plan requires that the residents identify **indicators** that will show whether the precondition is being achieved or not. Indicators let us know if the intervention is having the desired effect. These are used in the evaluation of the campaign. For example, members of the organization might rate the level of garbage in the alleyways each week so it can judge if the alleyways are cleaner since the campaign began.

Of course, a full Theory of Change would likely identify several preconditions that would need to be reached in order to achieve the outcome. Many of the preconditions will also have their own preconditions. Once the pieces of the Theory of Change are identified, a plan of action can be developed.

Building & Strengthening Your Base must be a central part of any plan of action. The key questions that need to be answered to complete this task are:

1. Who can we legitimately speak for?
2. Who else do we need to involve in order to broaden our base?
3. What specific steps are we going to take to inform and engage our existing base?
4. What specific steps are we going to take to inform and engage potential members?
5. Who will be responsible for coordinating the outreach efforts?
6. What resources will we need to reach the various constituent groups? (e.g., flyers, interpretation, childcare, transportation, etc.)

STEP 4: TAKING ACTION:

Out of the research and planning should come a set of steps designed to bring the group to its goals/ outcomes. The action step is to carry out the interventions identified in the Theory of Change. It is important to remember that the ability to influence the outcome is directly related to the strength of the group. Policy decisions are based on power first and ability to resolve the issue second. Remember, politics is the art of translating the ideal into the real and our actions are meant to increase the influence of the residents' perspective in defining both the “ideal” and how it gets translated into the “real,” i.e., public policy.

The first step in taking action is knowing who the Target of the action is. The “Target” is the person or office that has the authority to address the issue identified in the plan. Targets often

change as the campaign evolves. With the garbage example, the first Target would likely be the head of the Public Works Department. As the campaign goes on and it becomes clear that the Public Works Department cannot make the decision because of budget constraints, the Target might shift to the people or office that controls the Public Works Department budget. Eventually the campaign is likely to lead to the City Councilor's office and/or the Mayor's office.

Once the Target is identified, the next step is to examine where their authority comes from [See Community Power Analysis in the appendix]. In other words, what is the source and base of their power? The **source of power** explains why the target has the power it has. The source of a target's power typically comes from the resources it controls. In this case, it is the garbage collection schedule and the budget. The **base of power** is where the target's power comes from. Who bestows that power? Who is the target accountable to? The head of the Public Works Department is accountable to the Mayor, who must answer to the City Council, who, along with the Mayor, are accountable to the residents of the City of San Diego. Understanding the source and base of power are important in designing the change strategy because you cannot change the behavior of a target without addressing these issues of power.

In pushing for the desired outcome it is important to **Think Strategically** as you move into action. Thinking strategically begins with knowing **who will support you, who will oppose you, and who will stand on the sidelines**. Organizations, like most people, act on what they believe to be their self-interest. As the campaign moves forward, organizations will fall into one of the three categories. Before moving into action, it is important to know who will stand where. Thinking strategically means drawing in as many allies as possible, minimizing the opposition, and winning over as many of those on the sidelines as possible. Knowing the motivating force [See Community Power Analysis in appendix] for each organization can assist in assessing where they fit in these categories. Understanding the source and base of power of an organization provides insight into why things are done the way they are and what the organization needs to do in order to change how things are done.

The more things change the more they stay the same. In physics there is the law that states that "for every action there is an equal or greater reaction." This law is as true in politics as it is in physics. In fact, Saul Alinsky, considered by some to be the father of modern community organizing, once said that the "action is in the reaction." As the campaign moves forward and increases its demands on the system, it is important to anticipate some negative reaction from the system. While the head of the Public Works Department might initially welcome your first visit to his/her office, you might find that as you bring pressure on that department it becomes less and less friendly. There are several ways systems react to community pressure. Perhaps the most common reaction is to begin to restrict the flow of information. As the campaign progresses the organization may find it harder to get information from the target. Another common strategy is to portray the organization as unreasonable. Exclaiming to the public that all that is possible is being done and the group is simply a collection of complainers. These strategies typically involve labeling one leader as unreasonable and another as reasonable and communicating only with the "reasonable" leader. The same strategy is used to divide and conquer coalitions. However, instead of reasonable and unreasonable leaders there are reasonable and unreasonable organizations. In this case, the target typically attempts to gain favor with some of the organizations in the coalition.

It is important that the campaign stay focused on the behavior of its target and not on the target's intentions. The target will always claim that it intends to resolve the issue. If the campaign focuses on the target's intentions the argument will shift from what the target does to what the target wants to do. If this shift happens the focus of the campaign shifts the accountability away from the target because they are "good people" and they "are trying." Campaigns must never become personal and always be focused on behavior. In politics there

are no permanent enemies or permanent allies. Today's target may be tomorrow's ally. This cannot happen if the campaign becomes personal.

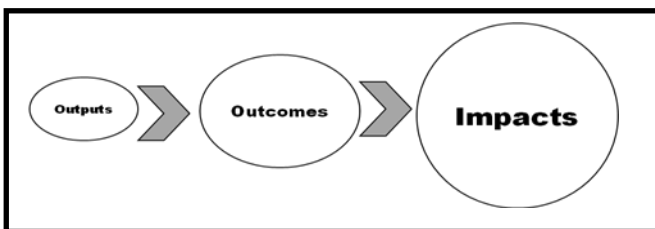
Campaigns rarely move forward smoothly or according to plan. The worst thing that can happen is for a campaign to become stalled. It is critical that the **campaign maintain forward motion** at all times. The energy within the community will ebb and flow with the other demands on people's lives. Some things to keep in mind as actions are decided upon:

- Campaigns ebb and flow with the competing demands on people's lives. Be sensitive to those demands and try to work around them.
- Campaigns must fit into the natural flow of people's lives. Again, know your people and how to work with their schedules. Do they have small children? Children in school? How does religion and custom fit into the demands on the group?
- Be transparent. Make sure the membership is as informed as possible of all things related to the campaign. Trust is based on transparency.
- Maintain an external focus. When campaigns drag on longer than expected or are not having the success hoped for, organizations often turn their focus internally onto the group and its members. This shift in focus is bad for the campaign and damaging for the organization. Be sensitive to this process and address it by adjusting the campaign if it begins to happen.

STEP 5: EVALUATION & REFLECTION:

The old adage that we learn from doing is not completely correct. In most cases, we only learn when we stop and reflect on what we are doing. As stated in step 4, no campaign goes completely according to plan. There are lessons to learn along the way and these lessons are learned only if we take the time to extract them from our experiences and examine them.

To evaluate the campaign fully we want to look at our outputs, outcomes and impacts. **Outputs** are the things we are doing to achieve our outcome. How many residents did we speak to?



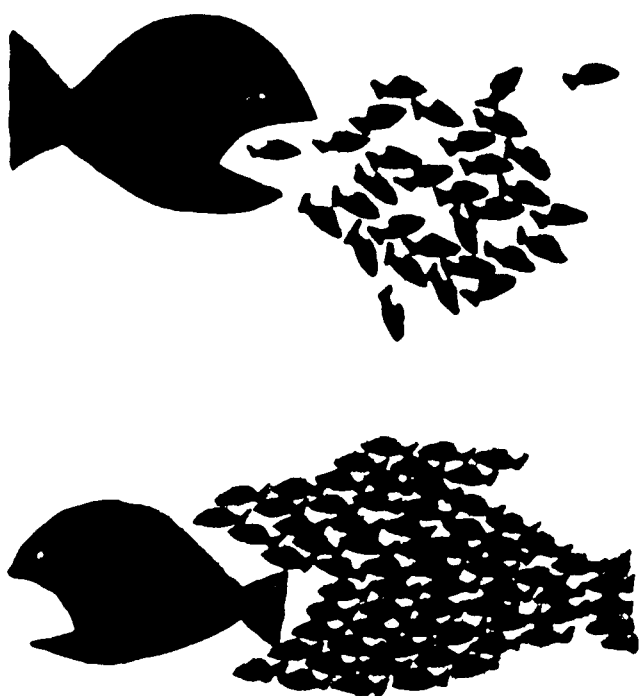
How much educational material did we produce? How many people came to our meeting? How many forums did we have? **Outcomes** are the immediate changes we see as a result of our outputs, our actions. Outcomes are both intended and unintended. We intended to get the City to double their garbage

collection, but instead they increased their focus on housing code enforcement and have begun to pressure the landlords in the area to get larger trash bins. These actions have angered the landlords and strained relationships between them and some of their tenants who are active in the campaign. This outcome was not intended, but the organization must deal with it. When assessing the outcomes achieved it is important to not overly focus on the stated outcome. In this case, the City is not collecting the garbage more often. However, it increased housing code enforcement resulting in landlords getting larger trash bins. While this outcome is not exactly what was demanded, the alleyways are cleaner.

Impacts go beyond the campaign and ask the question, what has changed as a result of this campaign? In this campaign we made people aware of the health risks of the garbage and now

residents in the area are being more careful with their garbage. Other potential impacts from such a campaign might be: a relationship with the City Councilor, several new leaders within the organization have emerged based on their involvement in the campaign; the City Public Works Department now has a liaison person assigned to work with the organization, etc. The organization is stronger and the City has formally recognized the organization as a legitimate voice for the residents.

It is easy to measure what we do (outputs). It is harder to measure how it affects people (outcomes), and it is almost impossible to assess the effect on the whole community (impacts).



Community Union Newsletter

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:

Perhaps the two most significant impacts of community organizing are: 1) the development of a grassroots organization that can bring the community's voice to the policy table with some authority; and, 2) the development of opportunities for grassroots leadership to develop. The key word here is "**grassroots**" which means that the leadership emerges from the community and is accountable to the community. When talking about leadership, it is important to distinguish **leaders** from **elites**. Most often, when we hear people refer to the community leaders, they are actually referring to the community elites. **Elites** include people in the community who have power that comes from their wealth and position. While they wield much influence, they have no real base of support in the community. Their base of power is their wealth and position and their source of power is how they use that wealth and position to shape policy. **Leaders**, on the other hand, have followers. A person is only a leader if there are people who are willing to follow his/her lead. Perhaps the difference between leader and elite is best captured in the statement, "He who leads where nobody follows, is merely taking a walk." Supporting existing grassroots leaders and developing new ones is perhaps the most important role of the organization.

***"He who leads
where nobody
follows is merely
taking a walk."***

John Warren, Editor-Publisher of
the Voice & Viewpoint]

Servant Leadership

"The servant-leader *is* servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is *leader* first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions...The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature."

"The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, *while being served*, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? *And*, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived?"

Robert K.Greenleaf
greenleaf.org/whatiss/

Carrying out this responsibility requires some clarity about **what we mean by leadership**. The leaders of grassroots organization that have been successful over the long-term tend to have leaders who look and act differently than the leaders (elites) portrayed in the media. Most leaders/elites are accountable to the people who have put them in their leadership position. For Elites, accountability is usually directed upward toward CEO's, funders, etc. For Grassroots Leaders, on the other hand, accountability is directed downward to the members who elected them. One of the best models of leadership for grassroots organizations is **SERVANT LEADERSHIP** because it emphasizes the servant nature of the leadership role. It acknowledges the importance of leadership while recognizing that the authority to lead must come from the group itself. Under this view of leadership, the role of the leader is to bring people together to collectively define their vision and mission – not to tell people what the vision and mission are. Carrying out this responsibility also means assisting the group in defining what must be done to achieve its vision and carry out its mission. Once these are defined it is the Servant Leader's job is to

hold the members accountable to that vision, mission and plan.

Grassroots community organizations differ from agencies in that the people who do the work are volunteers. They decide how much work they will do and, to some degree, what work they will do, and when they will do it. This fact expands the role of leadership in this type of organization. In general, it is probably safe to say that most bosses don't care if the employee likes his/her job as long as they do it. This is not true of grassroots organizations where the group must address

people's social as well as political needs. In terms of leadership, this means that there needs to be **two types of leadership** within the group for it to be successful, i.e., task leader and network builder. The **Task Leader** functions most like the traditional leader. S/he is focused on getting the group to define its tasks, set deadlines and responsibilities, etc. This type of leadership is necessary for any group to move forward on its agenda. The **Network Builder** is focused on making sure everyone in the group is feeling connected. Because the group is a volunteer association people join for multiple reasons. One of the most powerful reasons is social. The successful group, in addition to addressing community needs, develops social connections and networks. People look forward to coming to the group's activities because they feel connected to the other people involved. The Network Builder is the person who attends to the social needs. In practice, they are the person who asks people about their families, knows other people's children's names, lets the people who missed the last meeting know they were missed, etc. Grassroots groups cannot survive over a long time without people in these two positions. The Task Leader is often an elected and officially recognized position. These leaders are most likely to be the public spokespeople for the group. The Network Builder(s) position is rarely a publicly selected. The person(s) who fill this role tend to do it because it comes naturally to them. They are often people who would rather not be a spokesperson for the group. Because this role is not official it is easy to underestimate its importance. A healthy group finds ways to acknowledge the contribution of this type of leader.

Because **authentic leaders emerge from the group** and that **leaders are made and not born** it is critical for the organization to become good at identifying these leaders as they emerge. While it is true that most people are capable of being a leader under the right circumstances, there are characteristics that are common among good leaders. These characteristics can serve as checklist for what should be looked for in emerging leaders. To be a good leader (task leader or network builder) one must:

- Like People.** This may sound obvious, but not everyone likes people and this usually shows in their behavior toward them.
- Be a good listener.** This is perhaps the most important skill of any leader, particularly when acting as a servant leader. This critical skill is the ability to listen to people and draw out what their concerns are, how they think things should be, and what needs to be done.
- Is able to synthesize what s/he hears.** Listening is important, but is only half of the job. The good leader synthesizes what s/he heard and feeds it back to the community by identifying the issue and proposing a solution. If the leader heard the group correctly, they will follow her/him. If they do not follow, then the leader has not listened well enough and must return to the group and listen harder.
- Has his/her ego in check.** The leaders of a successful group can begin to gain a great deal of notoriety. The good leader knows that the notoriety belongs to the group not her/him. A servant leader is servant first and leader second. In practical terms, this means the leader must keep the notoriety in perspective, focus it on the group, and not allow her/himself to be taken in by it.
- Is vision and mission driven.** The servant leader's job is to hold the group accountable to its collectively defined vision, mission and plan. The good leader must be able to hold that vision and mission and reflect it back to the group so they can remain focused on it.

A leader who gets too bogged down in detail and loses site of the vision and mission will weaken a group.

- **Has the “Big Picture.”** The good leader sees how the work of the organization fits into the broader community, region, state, etc. and reflects this back to the membership. The good leader directs the group to maintain this larger perspective as it moves through its campaigns by reminding the group that their ultimate goal is to have the capacity to represent the community voice at the policy table with authority.
- **Has passion and faith.** Being a grassroots leader is a great deal of work, most of which is not compensated. To be a good servant leader is to have a passion for the group’s vision and mission. Passion is needed to fuel the work that needs to be done. Also, it is often the passion of leaders that inspire others to join – not facts and figures. The good leader must also have faith, faith that the ultimate goal can be reached. This need not be blind or naïve faith, but the leader must have faith in the process. S/he must believe that if the organization carries out its mission, the community will be better.
- **Encourages others to step into leadership positions.** Because leadership development is one of the most important tasks of organizing, it critical that existing leaders constantly look for and encourage emerging leaders. Again, these criteria can be used as checklist to identify leaders as they emerge. A good leader acknowledges the emerging leaders and encourages them to take increased responsibility in the group.



CONSENSUS DECISION MAKING

WHAT IS CONSENSUS? Consensus is a decision making process that requires everyone to agree before a decision is made.

WHY USE CONSENSUS?

Decisions made by consensus make a group stronger because the process ensures everyone's buy-in. Decisions made by majority vote have the potential of leaving a large part of the membership feeling left out. If 20 people make a decision by consensus then 20 people are committed to the decision. In a majority rule vote only 11 of the 20 people need to be committed to the decision, leaving 9 members with little commitment to the decision.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Deciding by consensus can take longer than voting, but the outcome is worth the effort. The diagram to the right shows the how consensus works. The steps are:

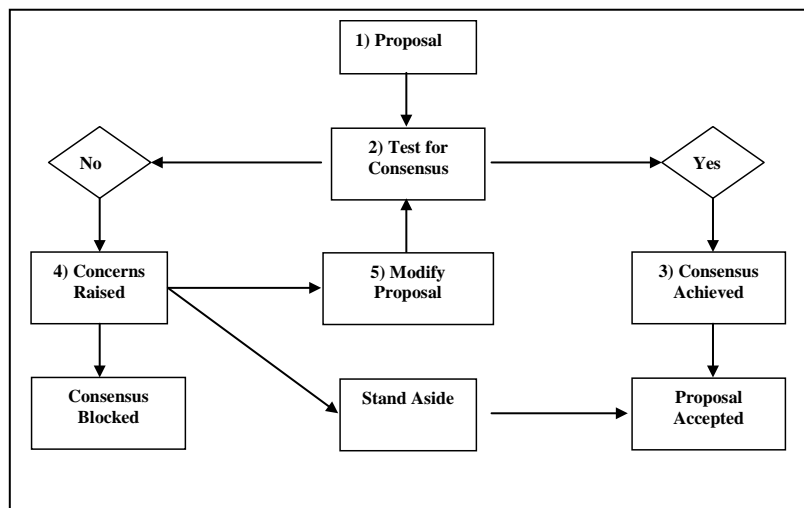
1. A proposal is made to the group

2. Test for Consensus: When a proposal is made, everyone involved is asked to state their opinion; why they think the proposal is good and why it's bad; what are the strong points and what are the weak points.

3. Consensus Achieved: If everyone agrees with the proposal as stated it passes

4. Concerns Raised: If there is disagreement about the proposal the group discusses it and works to modify it in order to address the concerns or objections people have.

5. Modify Proposal: The proposal is changed to address people's concerns. Once the proposal is modified, the group tests for consensus (step 2) again. If consensus is achieved, then the proposal passes.



If consensus is not achieved the group can either continue to modify the proposal until all objections have been resolved or it can ask the person or persons objecting to decide whether to block consensus or to step aside.

Step Aside: By standing aside, the person makes it clear that they do not favor the proposal, but their objection is not strong enough to stop it from being passed.

Block Consensus: By blocking consensus, the person stops the proposal from being passed. If someone chooses to block consensus, they must explain their decision to the group. Blocking consensus is a very serious act. It allows one person to stop the group from taking a particular action. Because of the seriousness of this action, the person who objects to the proposal must decide if their objection so strong that it should control what the whole group does. Usually someone only blocks consensus if they believe that

acting on the proposal is a violation of their own personal values or if they think acting on the proposal will harm the organization.

WHAT IF CONSENSUS CANNOT BE REACHED?

Some organizations fear that consensus decision-making can stop a group from moving forward on its agenda, especially since a single person can stop the whole group. To alleviate that fear, some organizations have adopted a modified consensus process. In the modified process the group attempts to make all decisions by consensus. However, on those rare occasions when consensus is not able to be achieved, the group can still move forward by modifying its rules. The most common way to modify the rules and still maintain the best of what consensus offers are:

- Begin by using the process outlined above.
- If after a pre-set number of attempts to achieve consensus, the group resorts to taking a vote of the members present. Groups usually set the number of attempts to somewhere between two and five before resorting to voting.
- If a group moves to a vote, most modifications call for a super majority vote rather than a simple majority. Super majorities are typically set at two-thirds or three-quarters of the members present.



SUSTAINABILITY:

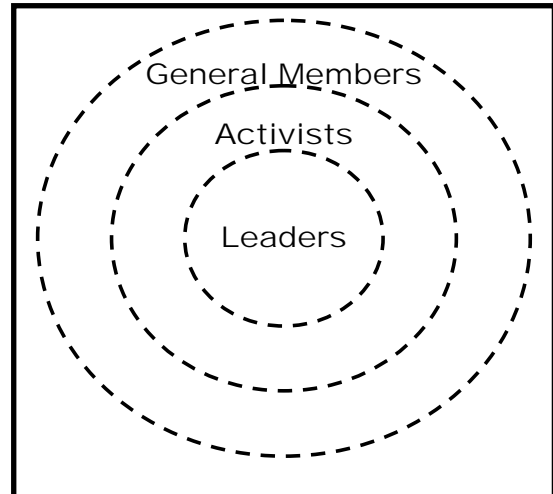
Grassroots organizations that stay true to their vision and mission tend to last a long time. The longer they exist the greater their influence at the policy table, making sustainability the key to building long-term and lasting power. There are at least five ingredients to sustaining a grassroots organization, these are:

1. Keep all “eyes on the prize.” It is important to always keep the organization’s eyes focused on its goals/outcomes. There are times when keeping all eyes on the prize is more difficult than others. Organizations, like people, go through stages of development. Also, like people, organizations during these times of transition are vulnerable to many influences. For example, organizations often struggle when they transition from the founding leadership to the second generation of leadership. It is not uncommon for there to be increased tension among members at that time, particularly new v. old members. The end of a campaign is another time of transition that makes the organization vulnerable. These tensions that arise, if not managed correctly, can become personal where differences of opinion on policy become “good guy” v. “bad guy.” When this happens an organization tends to dwindle in size and lose most of its core membership. The bickering makes involvement in the organization unpleasant and, given the competing demands on members, many will choose to stop attending. Every organization will face these kinds of transitions in its history. At these times, it is important to help members remember why they formed the organization and to select a target for a campaign as quickly as possible. The only successful way to stop this negative process is to reorient the organization’s eyes on a new campaign.
2. Keep your word – and keep your commitments. An organization is only as strong as its reputation. Sustainability requires that the organization be credible. Credibility comes from keeping your promises and doing the things you said you’d do. Organizations must be careful not to overpromise and to only take on responsibilities it can carry out. Organizations that fail to do these two things soon get a reputation for being unreliable. Once that perception is created, it is almost impossible to change it.
3. Claim your victories. It is important for the organization to claim victory when it can. It is rare that the “powers-that-be” will give credit to local community groups for making things happen. The group must assert itself and claim its own victories. Also, not all victories are that obvious. In the garbage example used throughout this document, the organization may not have gotten the City to double its garbage collection, but in response to community pressure, the City did step up its housing code enforcement. While this was not an intended outcome, it is a victory for the community group. Victories give people hope and hope is required for people to take time out of their busy lives to join a community organization.
4. Be open and flexible. A grassroots community organization can only sustain itself if it is constantly renewing itself. The organization must always be recruiting new members and developing new leaders. For this to happen, the organization must be open, flexible and encouraging. The organization must provide people with opportunities for different levels of involvement. Some people will give enormous amounts of their time while others will stand on the edges. A successful organization finds ways to include both types. It also finds ways for people to become more involved when they wish and less involved when life increases its demands. The diagram shows the three levels of membership required for an organization to be sustainable over the long term. These are leader, activist, and general member.

Leaders are the people who have made this organization one their highest priorities. Their commitment goes beyond any one campaign or issue and is to building and sustaining the organization. People in leadership positions put time into this organization on a weekly, if not daily basis. **Activists** also have a very strong commitment to the organization. Their commitment, however, tends to be more focused on the organizations immediate campaign and, while they value the organization, it is the issue that motivates them to act. Activists are typically not interested in organizational politics and have no interest in being in an elected position. They are, however, willing to give much of their time.

Activists are the people who can be depended upon to call other people, to distribute flyers, to do setup before and cleanup after the meeting, etc.

Activists give time almost weekly to the organization. **General Members** consist of people who care about what is happening in their community but are unable to give much of their time. They are willing, however, to come to an occasional meeting, a community forum and/or congress, etc. These are people who the organization depends on when they must show the level of support it has from the community.



Every organization needs members at all levels. Also, people need to feel as though they can move from level to level based on the time and energy they have to contribute to the organization. People in leadership roles must feel free to slow down if the demands on their life call for it. People in the general membership need to feel they can move into leadership roles. It is important to pay attention to membership at all levels. Organizations that struggle to survive typically have few activists. They may have strong leaders and be able to mobilize large numbers of people, however, without the work done by the activists the leaders will be more likely to burn out.

5. Build an infrastructure. If community members are to be full partners at the policy table they must have support. In most cases, the community voice at the table will be the only one not paid to be there. Those who represent organizations and agencies have the full support of their agency behind them. In practical terms, this means people have the time and resources they need to be prepared to sit at the table. It is their job to be at there and be prepared. Community representatives, however, are there in addition to the other demands on their lives. It is the grassroots organization's job to make sure their representatives are as prepared as all other parties at the table. When community representatives come to the table prepared it changes how they are treated and their power at that table.

There are several forms of support that should be institutionalized –that is- built into the organization and permanent – these are:

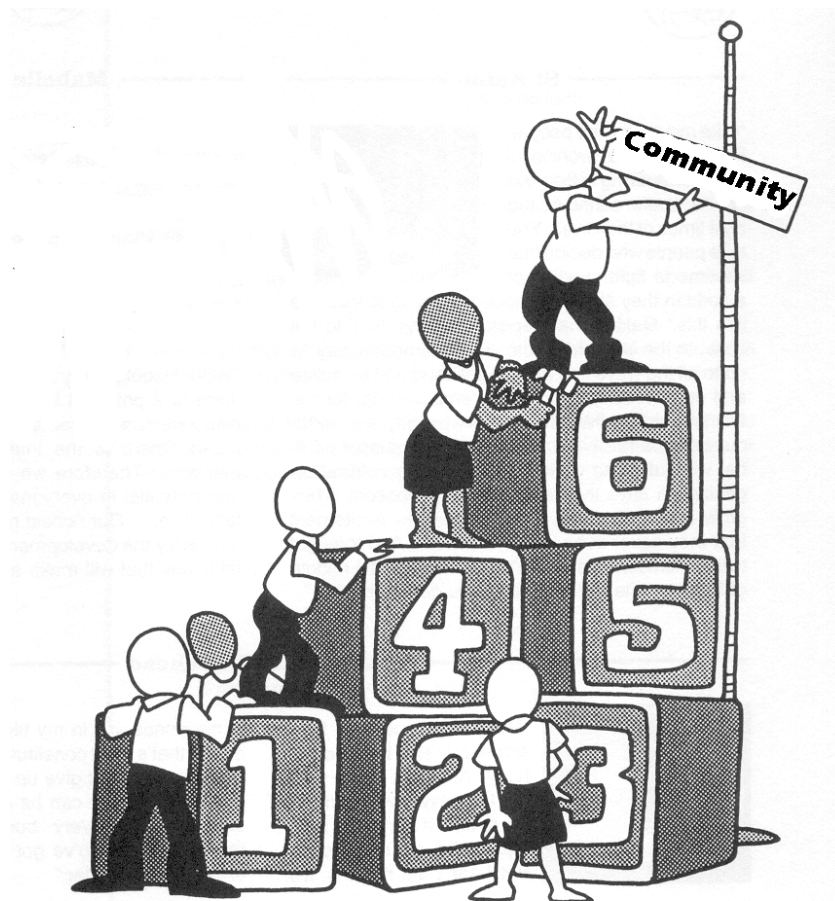
- **Staffing:** While having staff is not required to be a successful grassroots organization, it does help a group enormously. Staff are able to assist in maintaining communication among members, locating resources, supporting group process, etc.

- Technical Assistance: This form of support usually means giving members of the organization specific types of training and information designed to allow them to fully participate in the policy dialogue. This might include informing people of the building codes, city plan and its planning process, etc.
- Training: The topics of training and technical assistance overlap with the difference largely in how it is delivered. Training is a group activity while technical assistance is more like working with a consultant.
- Education: Educational activities are much broader in design than training and technical assistance. They typically focus on the larger, big picture issues. They might examine topics such as forces of gentrification, how the political system works, the values underlying our educational system, etc. The goal of these activities is to help people understand how these forces influence the political process and how they can be addressed in any campaign.



APPENDICES

- **Tips on facilitating meetings**
- **Community Power Analysis**
- **Issues of Power**
- **Theory of Change**
- **Youth/Adult Partnership in Community Organizing** (by Paul Watson, Jr., MSHS)



TIPS FOR FACILITATING THE MEETINGS

Ice Breakers

Should be simple and short – but require people to interact– preferable someone they don't know –and- it should require the person reveal something about themselves (e.g., pet peeve). No one likes doing these – but it does begin to create a connection among the participants

Clarifying and getting agreement on the Agenda

The Agenda lets people know what is going to happen – it gives the message that there is specific things to accomplish and helps keep the conversation focused. The meeting “accomplishing something” in the minds of the participants is key if you want them to stay engaged. Each agenda item should have a time set for it.

TIP: Inviting people to review and make changes to the agenda engages people right away and sends the message that their ideas count.

Keeping to the Agenda

There is a specific task to be completed – and it can only be completed if the agenda moves in a timely manner and people stay on topic.

If people begin to spend too long on a topic or begin to move to another topic, a simple way to keep the group moving and focused is to point out how long they have taken on a topic – or- that they have moved off the agenda.

TIP: Point out and ask: “We have spent 10 more minutes on this topic than we planned – do we need to change the agenda or can we move on?” Or, “We have moved off the topic on the agenda. Do we want to stay on this topic and change the agenda or do we want to get back to the agenda?”

TIP: If there is an issue that seems important to one or more people – but is not on the agenda, place it in “The parking lot” for future consideration.

Keeping track of time

This part of keeping the group on the agenda – however – it also means monitoring how much time people take up. There is about two hours to complete the agenda of the House Meeting. The more one person talks, the less time there is to hear from others.

TIP: Ask someone in the group to be the “Time Keeper”

Keeping track of who is speaking

We need everyone's voice. Watch for quiet people – take time to create space for them to speak.

TIP: If one or a group of people are speaking more than others you can say “lets give people who haven't spoken a chance.” or you can call on someone, “Jorge, you haven't commented yet, what do you think about this.”

Watching our language

It is important to watch the language people use. Some people express their opinion in a way that makes it difficult for others to express a different opinion.

TIP: Encourage people to only speak from their own experience

Setting the Rules

Most people know how to act in a group – but being clear on the rules helps the process. It can also make it easier to monitor the dialogue

TIP: Have a handout with some suggested rules for people to review, add, subtract, or modify

Summarizing and Feeding Back

This is a very important part of facilitating. It does two things. It makes the person speaking feel heard and it reminds the group of what they have agreed upon.

TIP: If you are unclear about what someone has said – or you think it is an important you might respond: “Monica, if I understood you, you were saying . . .” If you are correct, Monica will feel heard and everyone will be clear on her point. If you are not correct, it gives Monica an opportunity to restate her point.

TIP: About every 15 minutes – or- as you move from one agenda item to the next, you should summarize where the group is at. “Okay, so far we have covered . . . and have agreed on . . .” If everyone agrees, you have captured the groups sentiment. If people disagree, you have the opportunity to clarify any misunderstandings.

Achieving Consensus – without shutting out dissident voices

In most cases, there will be strong agreement on issues. There will be time, however, when a few people will disagree. While it is important to get as much agreement as possible, it is also important to express minority opinions

TIP: As you complete each question – write down a summary of the group's answer – asking members to assist you with the words.

TIP: Once you have the response written ask people if they agree (this is not a vote). If everyone agrees you can move on. If people disagree ask them to state their disagreement. Allow for discussion. If the person's opinion changes the group response – change the written statement and ask if people can accept it

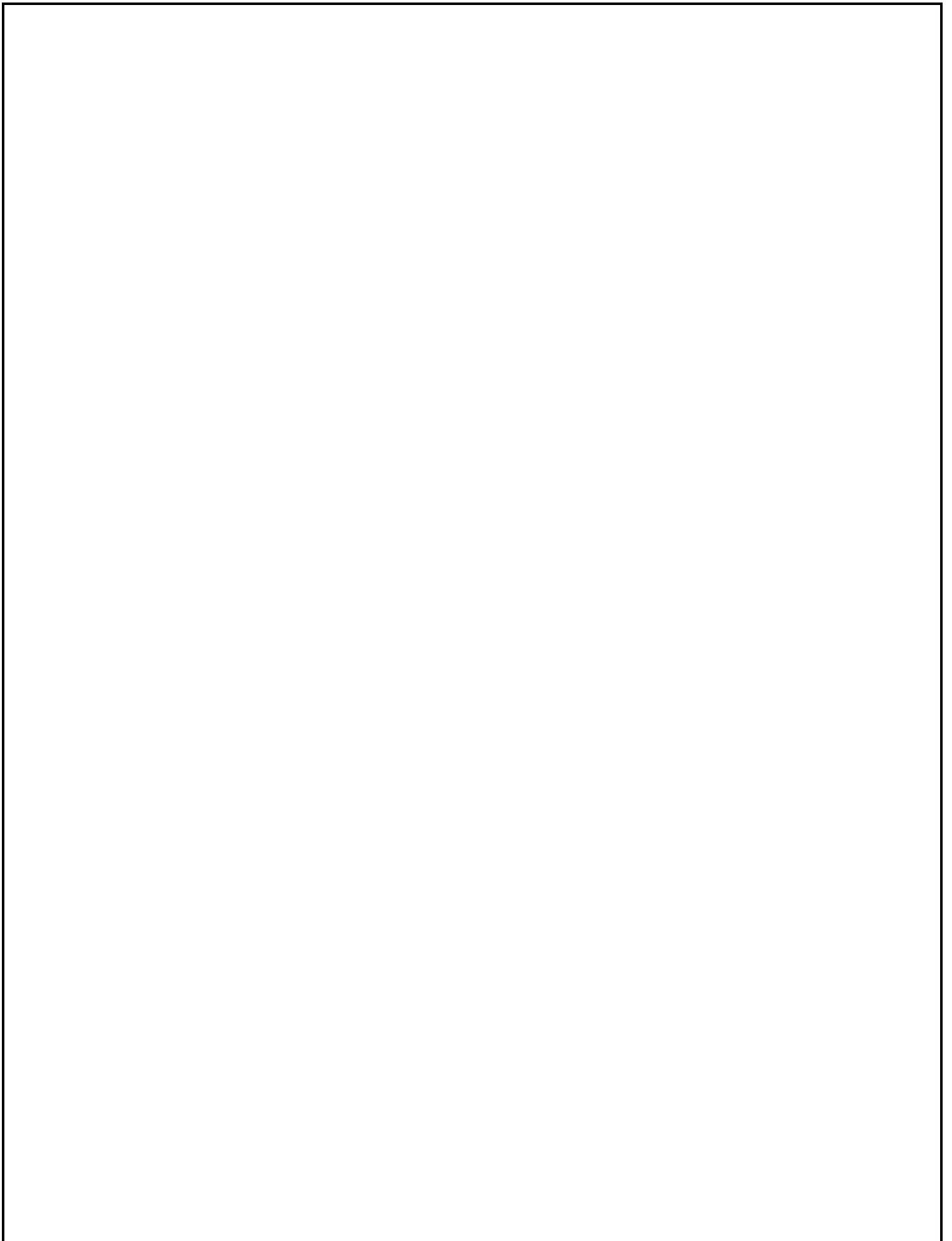
TIP: In cases where there are one or more people who strongly disagree with the majority – write out their statement on a separate sheet to be included as a “Minority Report” in the final document.

Closing the Meeting

When done, it is important to thank people for coming and pointing out what the group accomplished. It is also important to let people know what the next steps are and how they can be involved. Some people will be ready to join the effort that night, others will need to think about it.

TIP: Make a separate list –or- highlight the names on the sign-in sheet of the people who are ready to make a commitment

TIP: Spend a few minutes on the end having each person take 1 or 2 minutes to say how they felt about the meeting and what was accomplished. This gives you a quick assessment of success and reinforces the message the voices of the participants are important.



HOW TO DO A COMMUNITY POWER ANALYSIS

Once the group has selected its issue it can begin to develop its strategy. This Community Power Analysis grid is designed to assist in identifying potential allies and opponents as well as provide guidance in developing a strategy for creating change. The grid consists of five columns. The **first two columns** describe five sectors within the community. The third column, **Base of Power**, identifies where the power held by that sector comes from. The base of power typically describes who the particular sector is accountable to. For example, elected officials base of power is the electorate, the political party, and donors. These are the constituents the elected official is accountable to. The fourth column, **Source of Power**, describes what the sector uses to exercise its power. Elected officials have power because of their ability to set laws and policies. Bureaucrats' source of power comes from their control over government resources. Their base of power are the politicians and political parties that appoint them, their own expertise, and their longevity in the system. Finally, the last column, **Motivation**, describes what moves the group, why does it act as it does.

"You know, 'power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely?' It's the same with powerlessness. Absolute powerlessness corrupts absolutely." Studs Terkel

The following steps are suggested as a way to use this grid.

1. Once the target is identified, begin with the last column, Motivation. Identify the sectors that have similar motivations. The demand for increased garbage collection, for example, might draw the unions into the campaign as it could result in more jobs. This same process is used to identify those who may oppose you. If the garbage collectors are City Workers you might expect to find opposition from elected officials who might fear it will result in an increase in taxes. If the garbage collector is a private contractor, then it is likely to oppose the campaign as it might weaken their profits.
2. Once you have identified your friends and foes, you move to the third column and identify who your friends and foes are accountable to. With that knowledge, you can begin to develop your strategy. Knowing who your target is accountable to can broaden your target. For example, you might start your campaign by meeting with the head of the Public Works Department. That meeting might lead to a meeting with your City Councilor – who then becomes part of the target.
3. The next step is to look at column four, Source of Power. This column gives insight into what resources you might be able to mobilize (from your allies) and what resources might be mobilized against you (your foes).

Once the supporters and opposition are identified, the strategy can be developed. Basically, the strategy is create ways to maximize the resources you can mobilize for your desired outcome and minimize the resources available to your opposition.

COMMUNITY POWER ANALYSIS

WHO	DESCRIPTION	BASE OF POWER	SOURCE OF POWER	MOTIVATION
Political Hierarchy	Elected Officials	Electorate, Political Party, Major Donors	Influence on & access to policy decisions	Re-election
	Bureaucrats	Politicians, Political Party, Longevity, Expertise	Control over government resources, coercion	Control
Economic Hierarchy	Local Businesses, Chamber of Commerce	Customers	Influence on local economy	Stability
	Non-Local business (banks, national & multinational corps)	Stockholders	Control of capital	Profit
Unions	Private Sector	Membership	Control over production	Job security., wages, benefits, control of work
	Public Sector	Membership, Community	Control over production	Job security, wages, benefits, control of work
Human Service Sector	Public	Legislature, clients, electorate	Access to & control over government resources	Continuation of service
	Private Nonprofit	Board of Trustees	Access to & control of resources	Continuation of service
	Private For-profit	Stockholders	Access to & control of resources	Profit, service
	Trade Associations (e.g., NSAW, APA, AMA, etc.)	Membership	License/certification, access to policy via lobbying	Control, policy influence
Community	Churches	Congregation	Moral Concerns	Community, spirituality, morality
	Civic groups (e.g., Lions, Kiwanis, etc.)	Membership	Resources	Service, networking
	Recreational (e.g., Little League	Participants	Commitment of organizers	Service
	Citizen/Neighborhood Groups	Membership	Public Image, the vote	Community voice

ISSUES OF POWER IN ORGANIZING:

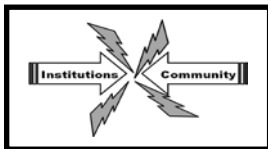
Ultimately all community organizing comes down to power. To be specific, **Power** is the ability to control the outcome of any process and it ranges from almost none to almost total power. No one is ever totally powerless and no one is ever all powerful. The purpose of organizing is to build a base of power – power that can be used to influence the policy decisions that affect our everyday lives. Earlier in this document, the point was made that *“politics is the art of translating the ideal into the real.”* Those who hold the power get to decide how the “ideal” is defined and those who hold power decide how that “ideal” gets translated into the “real,” i.e., public policy.

CHANGE = VISION + RESOURCES + POWER

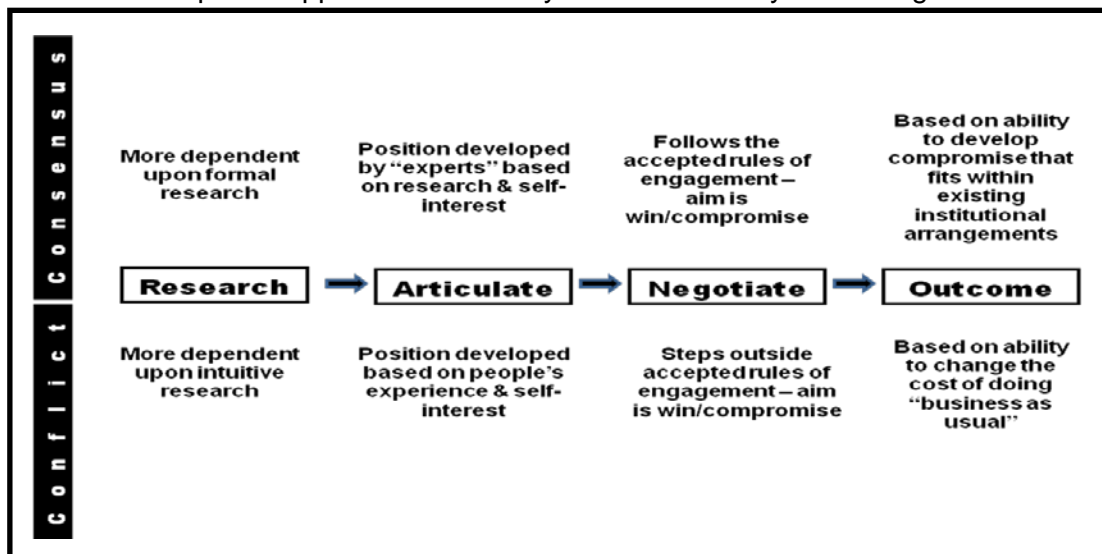
There are two ways people can view the issue of power within the community. One view of power, **consensus**, operates from the belief that all segments of the community really want the same thing. Our goals and desired outcomes are the same. Any disagreement within the community is about what we should do to achieve our goals and desired outcomes. In this view, the goal is to have all interested parties come together, share their perspective, and then to come up with a solution that all can agree upon. The consensus view assumes that all segments of the community are equal in power and resources when at the policy table.



Another view of power within the community, **conflict**, operates from the belief that the various segments of the community act on their own perceived self-interest. It is also believed that these segments will pursue those interests regardless of the impact on the other segments of the community. In this view, those with the greatest resources and greatest power control the outcome of any process. When there is a power imbalance the segment of the community with power will dominate policy development and implementation. If the community is not fully represented at the policy table, then there is a power imbalance.



These two views of power approach community issues differently. This diagram below



highlights those differences. A campaign based on the consensus view is more dependent on formal research than a campaign based on the conflict view. The research that supports the

conflict approach tends to be Participatory Action Research, where the research is designed, implemented and the data analyzed by the community members themselves. Formal research is typically done by outside experts.

It is important to note that the research approaches by both views are not contradictory. In fact, formal research and Participatory Action Research can complement each other quite well. The two approaches do, however, begin to separate at the “articulate” step. While professional opinions and experiential opinions often overlap, but they do differ. For example, research indicates that, when asked, professionals will identify community needs in terms of treatments and services. Community residents, on the other hand, define needs in terms of access to resources. The two approaches part ways in the last two steps. Organizations that operate from the conflict perspective are willing to step outside the accepted rules of engagement to press their position. Those who operate from a consensus view rarely step outside those rules. Lastly, those with the consensus perspective believe that, if a good process is followed, the differences within the community can be resolved within the existing institutional structures while those operating out of the conflict perspective often see the existing institutional structures as the core of the problem and at the heart of what needs to change.

The most common way to exercise one’s power is by setting the “**Rules of Engagement**.” The “rules of engagement” is a term that describes the accepted way for people to interact with each other at the policy table. Included in those rules are: what topics are acceptable for discussion, who has a legitimate voice, and what the acceptable range of desired outcomes are.¹ Who controls the rules of engagement has a great deal of control over the outcome of the process. If I set the rules at the policy table, I am more likely to get what I want than anyone else.

Those not involved in setting the “Rules of Engagement” are at a disadvantage throughout the process. They will be forever outsiders.

Power is constantly operating within any group or organization. It is very important to understand the power dynamics in the larger community, particularly as they relate to race/ethnicity, gender and social class. The level of respect people get is more often related to where they fit in one or all of those categories than it does for the contributions they have to make. If these power dynamics are not purposefully addressed then they will be present in the process.

If the existing power dynamic, particularly as it relates to race/ethnicity, gender and social class is not addressed, it will control the process. It cannot be assumed the issues of race/ethnicity, gender, and social class [among others] will not play a part in the development of policy unless we are intentional in preventing it.

¹ BusinessDictionary.com defines Rules of Engagement as, “Practices followed or behaviors displayed by the participants (players) in situations of opposing interests (conflicts) such as negotiations. Unwritten rules of engagement determine what information is given, and what time, to whom, and in what manner; and what concession is granted and what is demanded in return.”

THEORY OF CHANGE:

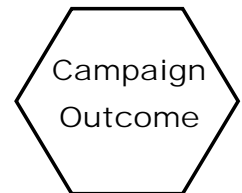
Material presented here is taken directly from: *The Community Builder's Approach to THEORY OF CHANGE: A Practical Guide to Theory Development.*²

"A theory of change is essentially an explanation of how a group of stakeholders expects to reach a commonly understood long-term goal." It is a step-by-step process that begins with the members defining, in very specific terms, what they want to achieve. Once that outcome is defined and agreed upon, the Theory of Change process guides the group, working backwards from the outcome, through a detailed planning process. When the Theory of Change is completed the organization has a map that can guide it toward that desired outcome. A brief outline of the steps is provided here. However, those interested in developing a Theory of Change are encouraged to go to the website identified below for more detailed information.

TASK 1 : IDENTIFY THE LONG-TERM OUTCOME:

"The very first task of the process is often the easiest to take for granted. It may seem obvious that everyone in the planning group understands that they are working toward the same long-term outcome but . . . that this is not always the case."

"It is very important for a group to be as specific as possible in the definition of their long-term outcome. Often, participants offer what we call 'mega-outcomes,' which are big, complex long-term goals, such as 'improved family functioning' or 'integrated services for youth.' Outcomes like these sound good in conversation, and they may work in strategic plans or proposals, but they are too vague to serve as a foundation for a theory of change."

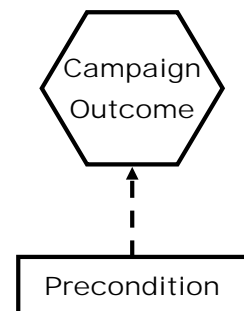


The clearer and more specific the outcome is defined the easier and clearer the plan will be. Clear and specific outcomes also make it easier to assess the group's level of success.

TASK 2: DEVELOP A PATHWAY TO CHANGE:

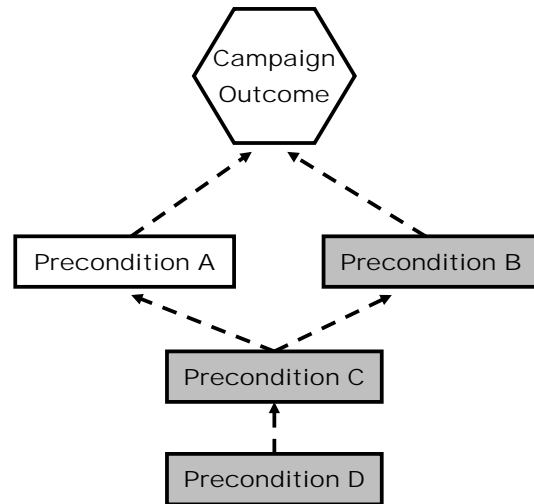
Developing the pathways is the most time consuming part of the planning process. The goal of this task is to "identify and sort all preconditions" that must be met in order to achieve the campaign outcome. Once identified and sorted, they are used to create a pathway to change.

Two **important things** must be kept in mind during this step. First, preconditions are nouns. If the campaign outcome is "additional garbage collection" then the precondition might be "Budget Allocation." Participants will want to speak in verbs - to say what they think needs to be done in order to achieve the campaign outcome. Remember, the task here is to identify the complete set of preconditions necessary to achieve the outcome what are the ingredients or building blocks. There will be time for action words as the theory of change gets developed.



² This guide was authored by Andrea A. Anderson and published by the Aspen Institute Round Table on Community Change. For more information about the Community Builder's Approach to Theory of Change, visit www.theoryofchange.org or contact Andrea Anderson at the Aspen Institute: andreaA@aspenroundtable.org

Theories of change are rarely simple, often including multiple steps. According to the diagram to the right, achieving the campaign outcome requires three levels of precondition that need to be met. These might include: Budget Allocation (Precondition A) and approval of the City Council (Precondition B) which requires the support of the Mayor (Precondition C) that can't be achieved without the support of the local City Councilor (Precondition D).

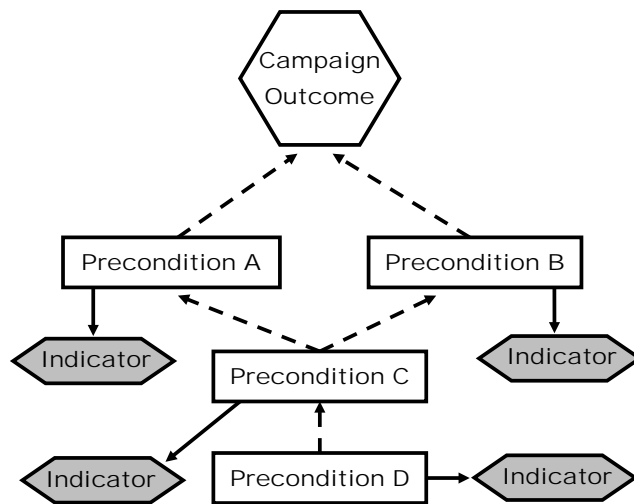


Building a Theory of Change is a process of "backward mapping. The process always starts with by defining the end point (Campaign Outcome) and then working backward. What must happen for the outcome to be achieved (Preconditions A & B)? What needs to happen to create Preconditions A & B? And so on . . .

TASK 3: OPERATIONALIZE OUTCOMES:

If Task 2 is the most time consuming, this task can be the most taxing. During this part of the process, participants "*operational*" the outcomes. "By operationalize, we mean that for each precondition in the pathway of change, participants will need to answer the basic question 'What evidence will we use to show that this has been achieved?' The answer to this question becomes the Indicator that will be used to track progress and document success."

In defining the indicator, it is important that participants think creatively about how to measure success and not feel limited by data that already exists.



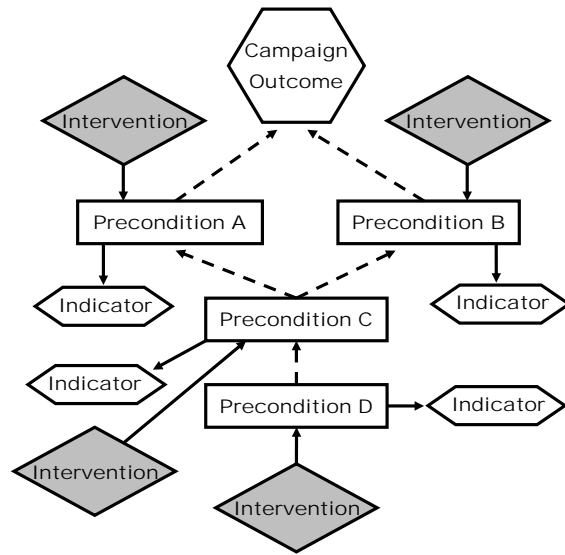
The process for operationalizing the preconditions requires the participants to answer the following questions for each indicator:

- What indicator will be used to measure success of this precondition?
- Who or what do we expect to change? This answer gives the **TARGET**.
- What is the current status of the issue? This answer gives the baseline. Success is measured in change from the **BASELINE**.
- How much change does there need to be before success is claimed? This answer gives the **THRESHOLD** that needs to be crossed in order to claim success.
- How long will it take to bring about the desired changes in the target? This answer gives the **TIMELINE** for the campaign.

TASK 4: DEFINE INTERVENTIONS:

Now that the pathways to change have been identified and the means of measuring success are clear, participants can begin to define the strategies or Interventions they must carry out in order to bring about the desired changes.

There must be a strategy for achieving each precondition. Initially, the greatest detail will be in the strategy for achieving Precondition D with strategies becoming more general as the process moves up through Precondition C to Precondition A. Strategies will need to be changed and/or refined as the campaign moves forward. The outcome of Precondition D will shape the strategy for achieving Precondition C and so on. Continuing with the garbage collection example, the most detail would go into developing the strategy for gaining the support of the local city councilor. If this goal is achieved, the City Councilor becomes part of the strategy for achieving the support of the Mayor. If this goal is not achieved, then the strategy must include how to win the Mayor's support without the support of the City Councilor.



It is in this stage of planning that issues of power will begin to arise. The Community Power Analysis presented in the appendices can be a useful tool in developing strategies.² This analysis suggests that answering the following questions will provide the basis of the strategies needed.

It is in this stage of planning that issues of power will begin to arise. The Community Power Analysis presented in the appendices can be a useful tool in developing strategies.³ This analysis suggests that answering the following questions will provide the basis of the strategies needed.

1. **Who has the authority to approve the changes necessary to bring out the desired outcome?** Strategy will be dictated by who the target is. Is the target a local person (city official, local business, etc.) or is it regional (county), state, or federal? Local and regional campaigns can be conducted by local organizations. However, change beyond the region will require coalition building with like-minded organizations throughout the state or country.
2. **Where do those with stand on the campaign outcome?** When an issue is raised by the community, those in power can react in a range of ways. At one end of the continuum, they can embrace the campaign outcome and use their authority to support making the necessary changes. In the middle, they could be generally supportive of the campaign outcome, yet not see it as a priority, at least for now. At the other end, they can oppose the idea. Clearly there would be different strategies for different reactions. Understanding the target's motivation (last column on Community Power Analysis grid) can help in predicting who is likely to support and/or oppose any campaign.
3. **What is the source of the authority?** The source of one's authority generally comes from access to resources and the authority to distribute them. If I am allocating resources, then I can say what one must do to get the resources. If the

³ The material on Community Power Analysis is not taken from *The Community Builder's Approach to THEORY OF CHANGE: A Practical Guide to Theory Development*. It is drawn from the work of Bill Oswald.

authority supports the campaign, then the group's strategy can include access to those resources in their strategy development. If the authority is supportive but lukewarm, then the strategy would include ways to gain active support. If the authority opposes the campaign outcome then strategy development must assume those resources will be used to stop the campaign.

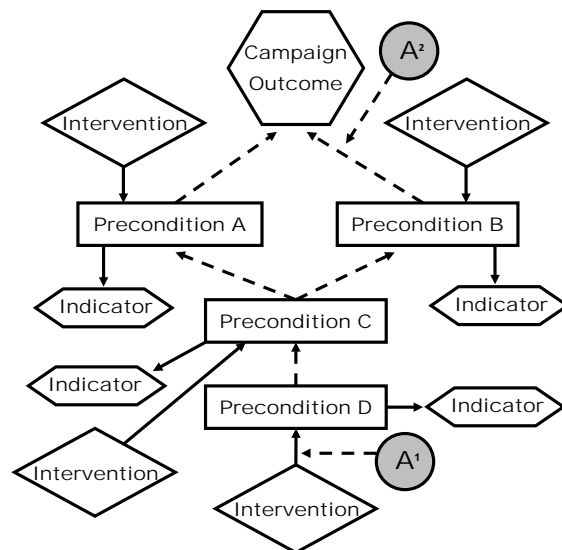
4. **What is the base for the authority?** The base of one's authority identifies where the actual authority comes from. Elected officials get their authority from the voters. Government bureaucrats get their authority from law and elected officials. If the target supports the campaign outcome, then the campaign strategy can assume it also has the support of the base. If the City Councilor is supporting the campaign outcome, it is because he/she assumes his/her constituents also support the campaign outcome. If the target is supportive, but lukewarm, the strategy might include persuading the target's base to push for support. If the City Councilor voices support but offers no action, a letter & telephone campaign from constituents asking him/her to take action on the campaign outcome can be a great motivating force. If the City Councilor opposes the campaign outcome, the strategy might include efforts to change his/her position or it might include ways of achieving the campaign outcome without his/her support. Activities might include the letter & phone campaign or it might mean finding ways to isolate City Councilor.

The answers to these questions provide the basis for the strategy needed to achieve the desired outcome.

TASK 5: ARTICULATE ASSUMPTIONS:

Assumptions tell us the "why." Why do we think a particular intervention will create a particular precondition -and- why do we think achieving a particular precondition will lead to a particular outcome. Why do we think meeting with the City Councilor with a petition of 1000 names will make him/her support the idea of more garbage collection (A^1)? Why do we think the support of the City Council will lead increased garbage collection (A^2)? In answering these questions the group begins to test the depth of agreement among the members. The discussion leads the group to be very precise in the language it uses so that all know what exactly they are agreeing to do.

It is also in these discussions that the group can begin uncover some of the more hidden social forces (e.g., racism, sexism, homophobia, ageism, adultism, etc.) that can have a profound influence on how the group operates and what it believes it can achieve. Different communities will have different histories and therefore different perspectives on what is important, how things should be done, what level of success the group can expect, etc. The more diverse the group, the more important it is to examine these issues. Any "isms" or forms of discrimination and prejudice that exist in the larger, broader community will exist within the group if they are not intentionally addressed.



Youth /Adult Partnerships in Community Organizing

By Paul L Watson, Jr., MSHH

Every community is being changed by its young people. Unfortunately, most change is destructive and the few adult partners young people have do not, for the most part, guide the creativity and energy of youth towards the good of the community. No serious community development effort can possibly succeed, much less be sustained, without the creativity and energy of its young people.

John Oyler, former Executive Director of the ICA office in Phoenix, Arizona,

Youth development research documents that two factors can negatively or positively impact a young person's development - their family and their community. By creating opportunities for youth to work in partnership with adults to minimize or eliminate negative impacts within their communities, we improve the young person's chances of having a positive transition into and being fully prepared for adulthood.

The community development processes enable people to work together around common issues and aspirations. This includes people coming together to pursue an activity for its own sake, developing organizations which provide services, participation in partnerships including management responsibilities, and involvement in broader movements to achieve social change.

Community development is about active sustainable communities based on social justice and mutual respect. It is about changing power structures to remove the barriers that prevent people from participating in the issues that affect their lives. Education and mutual learning are important aspects of community development. As a result of their involvement in community groups and activities, people acquire and re-discover talents, skills, knowledge, and understanding which enable them to take on new roles and responsibilities. This contributes to life-long learning by creating opportunities for reflection and evaluation of experience allowing knowledge to be shared through critical dialogue and building confidence amongst people who have neglected or abandoned their formal education at an early age. Community development encourages people to overcome those fears, prejudices and attitudes which restrict their participation and limit their self-esteem.

The Spirit of Ubuntu

Why get young people involved in community processes? The fact is they already are involved. They grow up in communities and are affected by what surrounds them. Young people should be involved in community development because they live in and belong to their community. If young people are not connected and respected, they have the power to destroy the community. Involving young people in the development of their communities encourages them to become stakeholders in their communities and to care about them.

Many of the neighborhood issues that community organizers are addressing are difficult and complicated. In order to be successful in their efforts they must make effective strategic use of all of the resources that they have at their disposal. Youth are a tremendous resource that are often overlooked or under utilized. Engaging young people as community organizers affords the opportunity to improve our communities in areas such as housing, jobs, safety, commerce,

infrastructure, human services, education, arts and media, faith ethics, civic participation, social interaction, and individual growth of residents.

There are many examples of young people successfully organizing community change efforts. In Butte County, California, youth are creating community education messages that will reach other youth around the issue of underage drinking. In the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn, New York, an organization – El Puente – has engaged youth to organize community residents to fight environmental racism in their neighborhoods. In Boston, Massachusetts, the Dudley Street Neighborhood Improvement Association has engaged youth to partner with them in organizing, planning and implementing an affordable housing project. In San Diego, California, a youth-led organization – San Diego Youth Congress – organized youth to participate in the redesign of the County's Mental Health system for youth.

There is an approach to working with youth entitled *Community Youth Development (CYD)*. The key elements of this approach include:

- Create a culture in which youth and adults respect each other and share responsibility.
- Create a just and compassionate society in which the focus is on the individual in community, and in which peace, justice and equality are valued and supported.
- Create a space where young people feel and are safe.
- Create a culture of appreciation, in which youth can learn about relationships in a caring context, can celebrate successes, be supported in failures, and can learn about their own and other cultures.
- Transfer practical, usable skills to youth and families to use among themselves and with others.
- Be conscious stewards of relationships, who value mentoring, modeling, and openness to learning.
- Use what happens naturally in relationships as a source of learning for both the youth and the youth worker.
- Create opportunities for youth to find their own path and identity.

Civil society is both a global and a local phenomenon. It is within the urban neighborhoods and rural villages of this world that communities grow and flourish, or die and are destroyed. Which of these two paths is followed depends on many factors; one of the most critical is the degree and quality of participation of all people in shaping the direction of their communities, particularly young people. Too often, young people have been regarded as an accessory to community development. It is time they took their rightful place as full members of civil society. When young people are involved, the whole community benefits from their energy, responsiveness, and accomplishments. In the long run, training youth as community-minded citizens is an investment in the community's future.