



**community organising**  
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### workshop goals

- Develop a shared understanding of Community Organising as an approach to social change
- Explore the strengths and weaknesses of Community Organising
- Consider when, why and how to apply Community Organising as a suitable way to work for change

### agenda

- who are we? who are you?
- what is community organising? what distinguishes community organising from other social change approaches?
- community organising campaign components:
  - cutting issues, develop SMART objectives,
  - power mapping, identifying targets, allies, constituents
  - alliance building
  - tactics to strategy
  - accountability sessions
- the community organising test
- wrap-up, resources, evaluations

### active listening

- what is community organising?
- what does it involve?
- where can you see community organising taking place?

<b>Community Organising</b>	<b>Community Development</b>
<b>Service Delivery</b>	<b>Advocacy</b>

definitions

**Advocacy and Service Delivery** are both characterized by **doing for people**. Often professionals like lawyers or social workers will attack a problem on behalf of those perceived as unable to speak for themselves. Job referral services, social work, training for job readiness, homeownership counselling, business plan preparation training - these are methods which fit into the Advocacy or Service Delivery strategy.

Beckwith & Lopez 1997

definitions

**Community development** approaches seek to bring people together to address their own needs and aspirations, and to help people develop a greater sense of community and build trust, reciprocity and shared values. It often takes the form of arts projects, cultural festivals, skills-based workshops that celebrate community and provide personal and collective development opportunities for frequently marginalised folks. Community development manifests as medium-term projects designed, managed and facilitated by community (cultural) development workers and artists.

definitions

**Community organising** is a strategic approach to social action that addresses immediate community priorities, builds power by mobilising citizens and challenges structural inequalities.

**Community organisers** work behind the scenes to build networks, sustain community action for the long term and recruit, mentor and support spokespeople and activists.

**Community organisers** perceive a community problem and initiate a program, coalition or organisation, not an employee engaged to manage a project. Community organisers have a long-term perspective and involvement, supporting, mentoring and networking community activists.

## definitions

**Community organizing** is characterized by the mobilizing of volunteers. Staff roles are limited to helping volunteers become effective, to guiding the learning of leaders through the process, and to helping create the mechanism for the group to **advocate on their own behalf**. Community organizing almost always includes confrontation of some sort. The people who want something **get themselves together to ask for it**, often the people who could give them what they want get jumpy. Community organizing strategies include meeting with corporate or government decision makers to hold them accountable for their actions, designing programs for others (not the group) to implement that meet the needs of the community, and aggressive group action to block negative developments or behaviors (highway construction that leads to neighborhood destruction, etc.)

Beckwith & Lopez 1997

<p><b>Community Organising</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-term orientation</li> <li>• Gets issues from people</li> <li>• Action oriented</li> <li>• Practices confrontation and negotiation</li> <li>• Staff exist to organise people</li> </ul>	<p><b>Community Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium-term orientation</li> <li>• Derives issues from planned objectives</li> <li>• Process oriented</li> <li>• Cooperation with authorities</li> <li>• Staff manage and direct projects</li> </ul>
<p><b>Service Delivery</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short term orientation</li> <li>• Derives service needs from the community (needs assessments) and from planned objectives</li> <li>• Process and outcome oriented</li> <li>• Cooperation with authorities</li> <li>• Staff provide services</li> </ul>	<p><b>Advocacy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short term orientation</li> <li>• Derives issues from public policy agenda</li> <li>• Results oriented</li> <li>• Involves education, confrontation and negotiation</li> <li>• Staff represent the interests of those affected, provide information and educate</li> </ul>

*These distinctions are not hard and fast, but a starting point for discussion*

## Climate change objectives

[quick and dirty example to illustrate different approaches]

For the Australian government to

- ratify the Kyoto Convention
- adopt a no new coal policy
- adopt and implement a 50% mandatory renewable energy target

... by December 2006.

<p><b>Community Organising</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alliance building (CANAs)</li> <li>• Establish new organisations</li> <li>• Community events that engage with decision-makers</li> <li>• Rallies and demonstrations</li> </ul>	<p><b>Community Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity building</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Eg. Cool Communities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Service Delivery</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green power schemes</li> <li>• Advisory services, rebates</li> <li>• Household energy audits</li> <li>• Eg. Cities for Climate Protection</li> </ul>	<p><b>Advocacy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research</li> <li>• Publications and reports</li> <li>• Lobbying and legal challenges</li> <li>• Eg. Uni clean energy now work</li> </ul>

"... people trying to pull an endless sequence of drowning children out of a river. Of course we must address the immediate crisis, and try to rescue the children. But we also need to find out why they're falling into the river - because no matter how hard we try, we lack the resources, strength, and stamina to save them all. So we must go upstream to fix the broken bridge, stop the people who are pushing the children in, or do whatever else will prevent the victims from ending up in the water to begin with."  
[Loeb 1999, p.209]

### Group exercise

- Campaign objective (SMART=Strategic, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-specific); for State governments to adopt 'no new coal policy' by December 2006
- Power map: Identify primary and secondary targets (decision-makers), allies, adversaries and constituents
- Alliance building: what are the five things that you are going to do to build an alliance that is broad and strategic and build an alliance that will maximise pressure and win outcomes
- Brainstorm tactics and activities that could be employed to achieve your campaign objective
- Organise these in a logical sequence (beginning-middle-end)
- Consider how a community organising approach can contribute, and to what extent you will rely on other approaches such as service delivery, advocacy and community development.

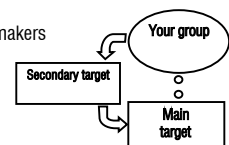
### MWA strategy chart

Goals	Organisational considerations	Constituents, allies and opponents	Targets	Tactics

Organising for Social Change (text) or <http://www.midwestacademy.com>

### The stages of an issues campaign

1. Cut the issue and develop the strategy
2. Open communication with the target (the person who has the power to give the group what it wants)
3. Announce the campaign
4. Begin outreach activities
5. Stage direct encounters with decision-makers
6. Build the organisation
7. Win or regroup



Organising for Social Change (text) or <http://www.midwestacademy.com>

## Cutting the issue

a **problem** is a broad area of concern

eg. unaffordable healthcare, pollution, racism and unemployment

an **issue** is a solution or partial solution to a problem

eg. national healthcare, green energy, affirmative action, federal jobs program,

*An organiser 'cuts' an issue so it is*

- **Immediate:** "The bulldozers are coming and you'll be out on the street tomorrow" is better than "Would you like to be part of the community planning process?"
- **Specific:** refers to both the problem and its solution
- **Realisable** (winnable): How do you win on global warming? Is it out of reach? Are there ways to cut the issue

### problems - issues

An issue is a problem the community can be organised around.

- not sustainable transport but better local bike facilities
- not hospital funding but more beds and nurses
- not open space management but the imminent loss of the local park

### Principles of Community Organising

1. People are motivated by self-interest
2. Community organising is a dynamic process that requires constant attention and effort.

**FWFWLFH**

**fight win fight win fight lose fight harder**

3. Group members need to learn to deal with conflict and confrontation.
4. In selecting an issue, every group has to take into account the fundamental definition of an issue (causes and symptoms, complaints, irritations, bad situations, oppressions, injustices, crises, messes).

Organising for Social Change (text) or <http://www.midwestacademy.com>

### The Ten Rules of Community Organizing

1. Nobody's going to Nobody's going to come to the meeting unless they've got a reason to come to the meeting.
2. Nobody's going to come to a meeting unless they know about it.
3. If an organization doesn't grow, it will die.
4. Anyone can be a leader.
5. The most important victory is the group itself.
6. Sometimes winning is losing.
7. Sometimes winning is winning.
8. If you're not fighting for what you want, you don't want enough.
9. Celebrate!
10. Have fun!

### objectives

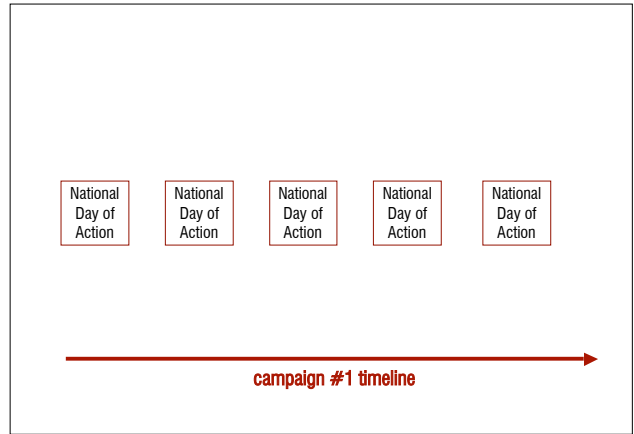
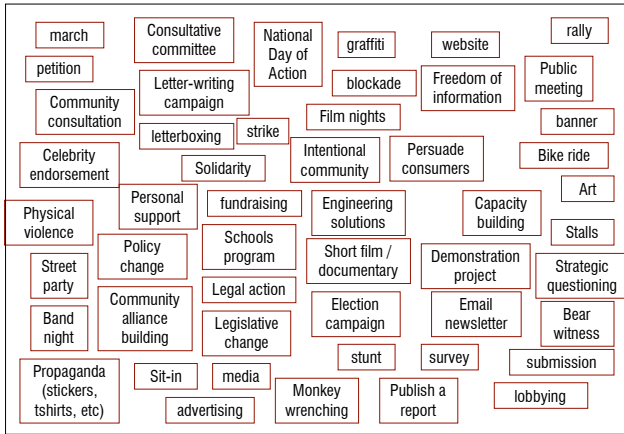
- Strategic
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Time-specific

- power-mapping
- target identification
- alliance-building

### Defining strategies and tactics

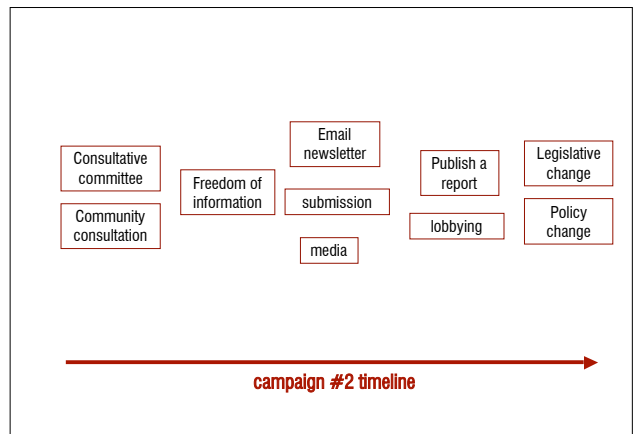
"If a strategy is like a stairway that takes us from our present position to where we want to go, tactics are like the individual steps. They are the component parts which together compose a plan of action. There are literally scores of tactics that a group can use. A few examples in ascending order of militancy are: letter writing, petition gathering, giving public testimony, marching, picketing, blocking access and sitting in."

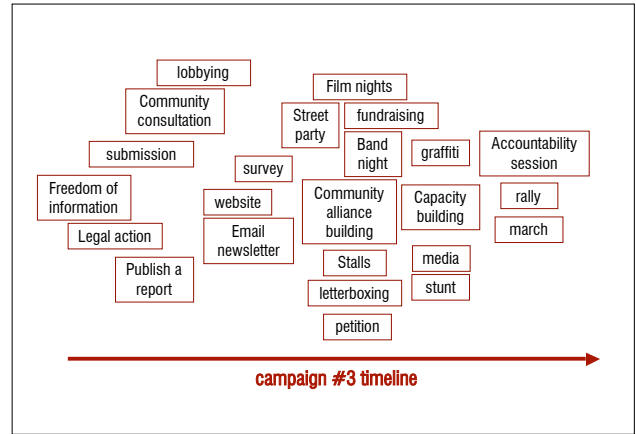
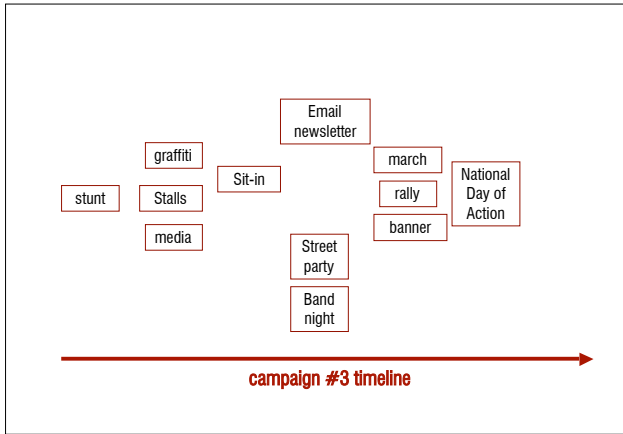
Staples, L. (1984) *Roots to Power: A Manual for Grassroots Organizing*. Praeger, Westport, CA.



*When the only tool you have is a hammer, every problem begins to look like a nail...*

Abraham Maslow





activist   organiser	
front line	behind the scenes
directly effected	abstract involvement
intrinsically self-motivated	agitator, motivator
locally based	consultant / outsider
amateur?	professional?
networker / volunteer?	career / vocation?

- community organising
- Methods for changing society**
- Physical Force
  - Political Force
  - Economic Force
  - Advertising, Propaganda
  - Engineering
  - Rational Persuasion
  - Emotional Appeals to Ideals
  - Emotional Appeals to Anger, Hatred, or Fear
  - Fellowship and Personal Support
  - Nonviolent Confrontation
- Reference: Schutt, R. (2001) Inciting Democracy, Spring Forward Press, Cleveland

#### Rules of Power Tactics

[Saul Alinsky, Rules for Radicals]

- Power is not only what you have but what the enemy thinks you have.
- Never go outside the experience of your people. Stick to what your people are accustomed to doing or the result may be confusion, fear and retreat.
- Whenever possible, go outside the experiences of the enemy. Confuse the enemy with the unexpected
- Make the enemy live up to their own book of rules. No organisation can live up to their own book of rules, so call their bluff and force the enemy to live up to their own regulations and statements.
- Ridicule is man's most potent weapon. It's almost impossible to counterattack ridicule and it infuriates the opposition who then react to your advantage.
- A good tactic is one your people enjoy.

#### Rules of Power Tactics

[Saul Alinsky, Rules for Radicals]

- A tactic that drags on too long becomes a drag.
- Keep the pressure on with different tactics and actions. Pressure produces reaction and constant pressure sustains action.
- The threat is usually more terrifying than the thing itself. Sometimes all it takes is a "leak" of what could/will happen to make the enemy negotiate.
- If you push a negative hard enough, it will become a positive. If you can keep the enemy reacting negatively to your actions you can turn it to your own advantage.
- The price of a successful attack is a constructive alternative. You can't risk not having a solution if the enemy gives in to your demands.
- Pick the target, freeze it, personalise it, and polarise it.

#### The Ten Commandments of Activism [Saul Alinsky]

1. Do unto others before they have a chance to do unto you
2. If something you do is ineffective, stop doing it
3. When you lose your temper, make sure it is well-planned
4. Be truthful and honest at all times, but know when to keep your mouth shut
5. Covet thy neighbour's vote, unless it is quite obvious you will never get it
6. Plan to change the world, but be happy with changing a single opinion
7. Be creative and never miss a free kick
8. Honour the media, even if it makes you gag
9. Be controversial, but watch the legals
10. Lighten up and have fun

#### Reading & references

- Beckwith, D. & Lopez, C. (1997) Community Organising: People Power from the Grassroots. Online <http://comm-org.utoledo.edu/papers97/beckwith.htm> (slides 1-4)
- Bobo, K., Kendall, J. & Max, S. (2001) *Organising for Social Change in the 1990s*, Seven Locks, Washington DC. Online <http://www.midwestacademy.com/> (slides 5-8)
- Whelan, J. (2005) A Hard Road to Learn: learning from failed social action, J.Crowther, V.Galloway and I.Martin (eds) *Popular Education: Engaging the Academy*, NIACE, Leicester. pp.157-168 Online: [http://www.thechangeagency.org/research\\_articles.html](http://www.thechangeagency.org/research_articles.html)
- The Change Agency <http://www.thechangeagency.org> > especially /links.htm