

Organizing Playbook for a world where

SheDecides.



Acknowledgements

Originally adapted by Mariana Brandeburgo (mariana@shedecides.com) from the works of Dr. Marshall Ganz of Harvard University and resources from the Leading Change Network and the New Organizing Institute. Visual design by Shape History. Illustrations by Evelyn Kandin Geler.

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Welcome!

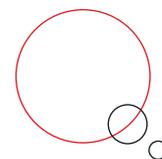
This Playbook aims to support you in developing your capacity to **effectively organize for bodily autonomy and sexual rights**.

Our goal is to provide you with an introduction to **organizing** as a group, a collective, a network, a community, a movement, or a coalition, and to encourage you to explore answers to the following questions:

- Why am I called to leadership in my community or ecosystem?
- How will I move others to join me?
- How will we develop strategy and how will we structure our work together?
- How will we enable new leadership?
- How will we achieve our goals?

How do we define “organizing”?

Organizing is leadership that supports¹ people to turn the resources they have into the power they need to make the change they want.



We break down this definition further by describing the five key practices of organizing:



Taken together, these five practices form the basis of our organizing framework. We'll refer to the above definitions throughout the guide and unpack what they mean in depth as we work through the framework.²

¹ The original definition proposes “enables”, Mariana Brandeburgo has made a cultural adaptation to the feminist movement and uses the word “supports” instead.
² Where does this ‘framework’ come from? Much of this framework was codified by Marshall Ganz. He developed the “Public Narrative” framework based on years of organizing in and research on social movements. At **SheDecides** we've used this framework, among others, to collectively develop our Theory of Change. We chose this framework as it heavily informed [SheDecides' Theory of Change](#), collectively developed by the **SheDecides** Movement and finalized in December 2020. We have also included references to the work of our sister movements, like the fabulous CREA Movements Primer developed by Srilatha Batiwala.

At **SheDecides** we define “**movement**” as an **organized set of constituents pursuing a common political agenda of change through collective action**.³ Sister movements use similar definitions. CREA’s definition fits our vision for this Playbook as it incorporates the notion of a shared struggle as a precondition to organizing a movement:

“A movement is a set of people with a shared experience of injustice who organize to build their collective power and leadership, develop a shared agenda for change, which they pursue through collective action with some continuity over time.”⁴



We want to explore how to organize for bodily autonomy. But what is bodily autonomy? Here is a working definition:

Bodily autonomy

We decide what we do with our bodies, and what does or does not happen to our bodies. When we have bodily autonomy, we have the power and freedom to make decisions about our wellbeing; our relationships and our futures; and we are supported to fulfil those decisions.



³ **SheDecides**’ [Theory of Change](#), December 2020.

⁴ All about Movements, page 13: https://creaworld.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/All-About-Movements_Web.pdf

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What is Organizing?

Organizing is a form of leadership.

The first question an organizer asks is not “what is my issue” but “who are my people – who is my constituency?”. Organizers identify, recruit, and develop the leadership of others. They build community around that leadership and build power from the resources of that community with and for the community.

Organizers do not provide services to clients. They do not run programs and they don’t focus on awareness-raising or campaigning as their core goal. Instead, they organize a community to become a constituency – a group of people able to “stand together” on behalf of common concerns. A constituency is committed to tackling the roots of injustice. It is a group of people who learn to stand together to decide, assert, and act upon their own goals. Organizing is not only about solving problems. It is about supporting the people with the problem to mobilize their own resources to solve it... and keep it solved.

This Playbook has five sections: one for each organizing practice.

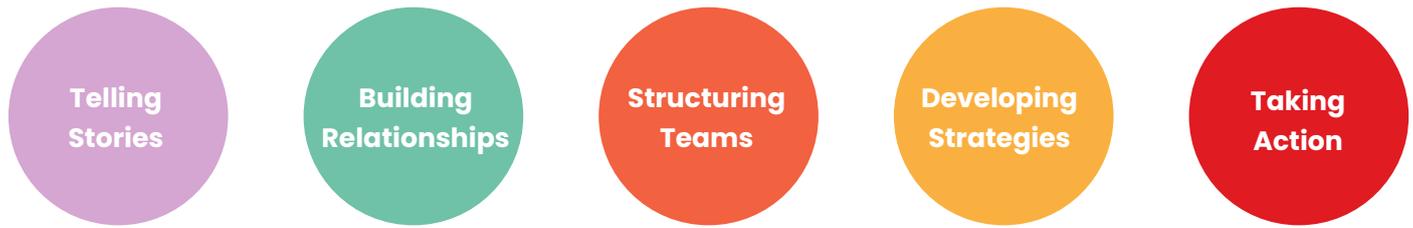
Disorganization	Leadership	Organization
Passive	Shared Story	Active
Divided	Relational Commitment	United
Drift	Clear Structure	Purpose
Reactive	Creative Strategy	Initiative
Demobilized	Effective Action	Mobilized

We organize to make sure our movement is led by the people with the greatest stake in the problem, with the greatest interest in making change happen.

When setting out their campaign, organizers ask three questions:

1. Who are my people?
2. What is their urgent problem?
3. How can they turn their resources into power to solve their problem?

They answer these questions in dialogue with their constituency by five organizing practices:



How is organizing different from advocating, mobilizing and campaigning?

Organizing is leadership that supports people to turn the resources they have into the power they need to make the change they want. It is bringing people together as a group to discuss, address and organize around what their priorities are. Organizers identify, recruit, and develop the leadership of others; build community around that leadership; and build power from the resources of that community with and for the community. They organize a community to become a constituency – people able to “stand together” on behalf of common concerns. Organizing is focussed on listening, facilitating discussion, building a sense of trust, and belonging among a group. Organizers are therefore people who aim for diversity in representation, who create an environment where all voices are heard and respected. Organizers create a group of people who agree to act on a common priority together.

Mobilizing is a collective expression of protest and demand. It is also a show of power over, so it requires a strong structure of power with. This means that before mobilizing, a constituency must be well organized. In mass mobilizations a broader public can join and express support for the demand. This means that a lot of organizing happened beforehand for mass mobilization to take place. Mobilizers fuel engagement in their organizing groups and sustain that engagement by showing momentum.

Advocating is planned actions by an individual or group to influence decisions within political, economic, and social institutions. To gain leverage advocacy campaigns sometimes aim at getting public attention. These audiences can be diverse: from policymakers to the media.

Campaigning is the rhythm of organizing. In your campaign each peak gets you more resources (people, media attention, connections, money) than the previous one. Sometimes campaigns aim at offering easy ways through which people can express support for an issue that an organized constituency is advocating for. These actions are designed to build public support for change on an issue. It can include many different aspects; lobbying decisionmakers in government, public events or demonstrations, public relations. When these actions are taken together, in planned action, it builds a campaign.

**“If I am not for myself, who am I?
When I am only for myself, what am I?
And if not now, when?”⁵**

Leadership in organizing focuses on the interdependence of **self**, **other**, and **action**. It asks what am I called to do? What are others I am in a relationship with called to do? And what action does the world in which we live demand of us now?

The fact these are framed as questions, not answers, matters. After all, to take action for change is to enter a world of uncertainty, the unpredictable, and the contingent. When organizing we have to ask: do we really think we can control it? Or do we have to learn to embrace it? Uncertainty poses challenges to the hands, the head and the heart. Therefore, we need to think about what new skills must my “hands” learn? How can my “head” devise new ways to use my resources to achieve my goals? How can my “heart” equip me with the courage, hopefulness, and forbearance to act?

Leadership requires “accepting responsibility for supporting others to achieve purpose under conditions of uncertainty”.⁶ Conditions of uncertainty require the “adaptive” dimension of leadership. This is not so much about performing known tasks well, but rather learning what tasks are needed and how to perform them well. It is leadership from the perspective of a “learner” – one who has learned to ask the right questions – rather than that of a “knower”, or someone who thinks he or she knows all the answers. This kind of leadership is a form of practice, it’s not a position or a person and it can be exercised from any location within or without a structure of authority.

Organizers develop new relationships out of old ones. They can do this by linking one person to another, and sometimes by linking whole networks of people together. This results in the formation of new networks of relationships that are wide and deep enough to provide a foundation for a new community in action.

Building these relationships requires the ability to tell stories.

⁵ Hillel (Pirke Avot, 1:14)

⁶ Marshall Ganz, “Leading Change: Leadership, Organization and Social Movements”, Chapter 19,



Telling Stories

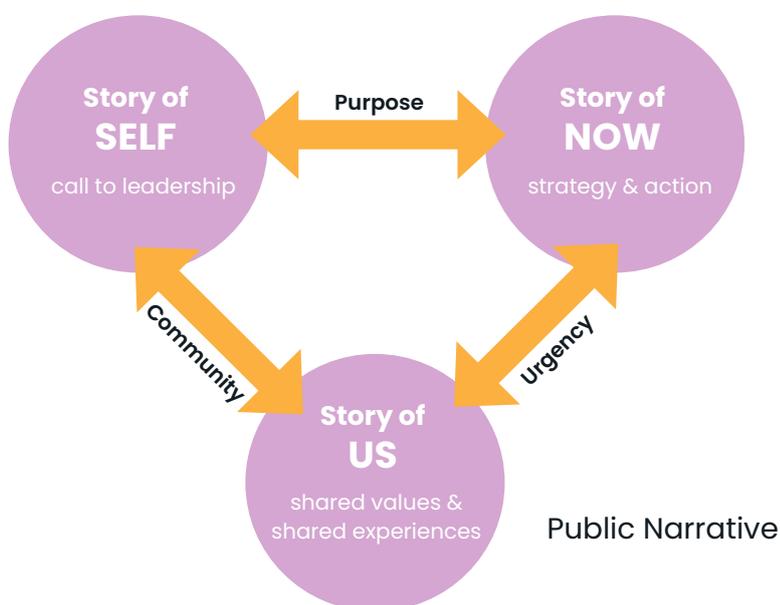
SheDecides.

Telling Stories

Organizing is motivated by shared values expressed through public narrative.

By learning the craft of public narrative, we can access our shared values and find the emotional resources we need to respond to challenges with courage, rather than reacting to them with fear.

Doing so requires building **brave and safe spaces** for people to come together and share their stories. By learning to tell stories of sources of our own values – a “story of self” – we can enable people to “get us”. By recognizing the current moment as one of urgent choice and proposing a hopeful way forward – a “story of now” – we motivate action.



This cannot wait. We are joyfully organizing for urgent change so **SheDecides** now. Values-based organizing – in contrast to issue-based organizing – invites people to escape their “issue silos” and come together so their diversity becomes an asset, rather than an obstacle. By learning how to tell a public narrative that bridges the self, us and now, organizers enhance their own efficacy, creating trust and solidarity within their campaign. This equips them to engage others far more effectively.

Crafting a complete public narrative is a way to connect three core elements of leadership practice. These are:

1. **Story:** Why we must act now (heart)
2. **Strategy:** How we can act now (head)
3. **Action:** What we must do to act now (hands)

Standing for yourself is a first but insufficient step. You must also construct the community with whom you stand and move that community to act together now.

To combine stories of self, us and now, you will need to:

- Find common threads in values that call you to your mission
- Find values shared by your local or global community
- Find challenges to those values that demand action now

You may want to begin with a “Story of Now” – the story to create change; before working backward through the “Story of the Us” – the community you are working with; and then tell the “Story of Self” – your reason for organizing in this field.

Public narrative as a leadership practice

Leadership is about accepting responsibility for supporting others to achieve shared purpose in the face of uncertainty. Narrative is how we learn to access the moral resources and the courage to make the choices that shape our identities – as individuals, as communities, and as movements.

Each of us has a compelling story to tell

Everyone can learn to tell a story that can move others to action. We all have stories of challenge, otherwise we wouldn't think the world needed changing. We also all have stories of hope, or we wouldn't think we could change it. As you learn this skill, you will learn to tell a story about yourself (story of self), the community who you are organizing (story of us), and the action required to create change (story of now). You will learn to tell, to listen, and to coach others.

Learning Public Narrative

We are all natural storytellers. We are “hard wired” for it. Although you may not have learned how to tell stories “explicitly”, such as knowing their structure, the techniques, you will have learned “implicitly”. This is when we share anecdotes, tell a story about our day, imitate others and respond to how others react to you.

We want to encourage you to learn to make the implicit explicit.

If you are exploring this playbook with the community you are organizing with, you can use a four-stage pedagogy:

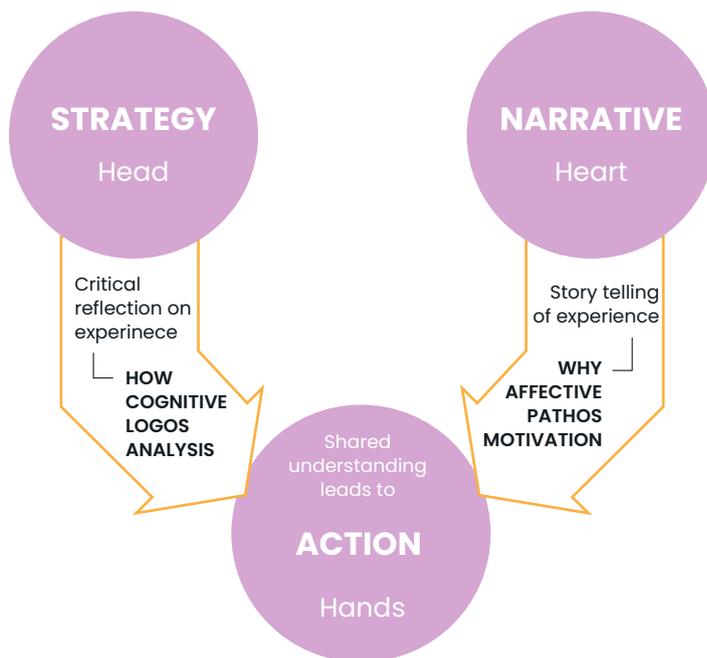
1. **Explain** – First we will explain how a story works.
2. **Model** – You will then observe a model of storytelling (in video).
3. **Practice** – You will practice your own story with a fellow organizer.
4. **Debrief** – You will debrief your practice with others.

You will learn this practice the way we learn any practice: through repetition, making mistakes and learning from them. Remember, we all live rich, complex lives with many **challenges, choices,** and **outcomes** of both failure and success. We can never tell our whole life story in two minutes. First, we need to learn to tell a two-minute story to master the craft of public narrative. The time limit focuses on getting to the point, offering **images** rather than lots of words, and choosing choice points strategically.

How Public Narrative Works

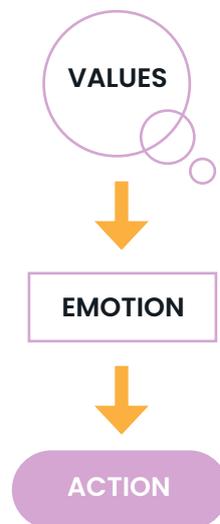
Why use public narrative?

We've already learned that leadership requires engaging the "head" and the "heart" to engage the "hands". That's when we mobilize others to act together purposefully. Leaders engage people in interpreting **why** they should change their world – their motivation – and **how** they can act to change it. This is strategy. Public narrative is the "why". It's the art of translating values into action through stories.



The key to motivation is understanding that values inspire action through emotion.

Emotions inform us of what we value in ourselves, in others, and in the world. They enable us to express the motivational content of our values to others. Stories draw on our emotions and show our values in action. They help us to feel what matters, rather than just thinking about or telling others what matters. Because stories allow us to express our values not as abstract principles, but as lived experience, they have the power to move others.



Some emotions inhibit action, but other emotions facilitate action.

The language of emotion is the language of movement. They share the same root word. Mindful action is inhibited by inertia and apathy, on the one hand, and fear, isolation and self-doubt on the other. It can be facilitated by urgency and anger, and by hope, solidarity, and the belief “you can make a difference” (Y.C.M.A.D.). Stories can mobilize emotions, enabling mindful action to overcome emotions that inhibit it.



The three key elements of public narrative structure are: challenge, choice and outcome

Think about the stories you read or see on the TV. They have a plot. That plot begins with an unexpected challenge that confronts a character with an urgent need to pay attention, to make a choice. Often, it's a choice for which s/he is unprepared. The choice yields an outcome – and the outcome teaches a moral.

When we are told a story, we can empathetically identify with the character. We can therefore “feel” the moral. We not only hear “about” someone’s courage. We are also inspired by it.

The story of the character and their effort to make choices encourages listeners to think about their own values and challenges. It inspires them with new ways of thinking about how to make choices in their own lives.

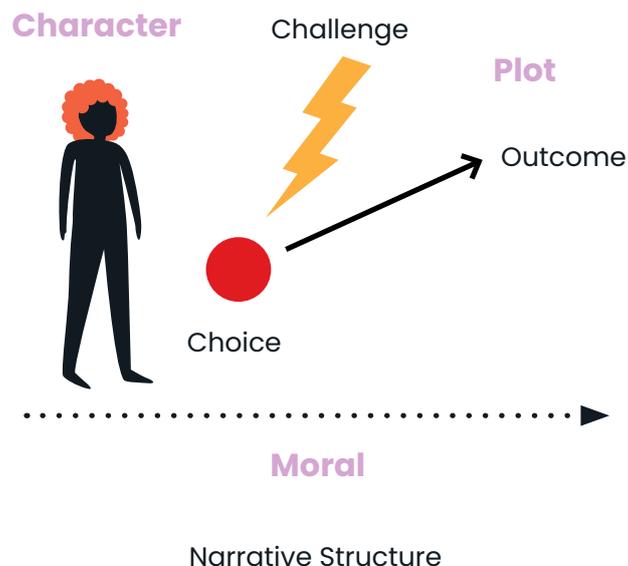
Incorporating challenge, choice, and outcome in your own story

When telling your story, there are key questions to answer. You need to consider the choices you have made in your life and the path you have taken that brought you to this point in time as a leader. It may have been your first true experience of community in the face of challenge, or your choice to do something about injustice for the first time. Once you have identified the specific choice point, dig deeper by answering the following questions:

Challenge: Why did you feel it was a challenge? What was so challenging about it? Why was it your challenge?

Choice: Why did you make the choice you did? Where did you find the courage (or not)? Where did you find the hope (or not)? Did your parents or grandparents' life stories teach you in any way how to act in that moment? How did it feel?

Outcome: How did the outcome feel? Why did it feel that way? What did it teach you? What do you want to teach us? How do you want us to feel?



A word about challenge: Sometimes people see the word challenge and think they need to describe the greatest misfortunes of their lives. Keep in mind that a struggle might be one of your own choosing: a high mountain you decided to climb as much as a valley you managed to climb out of. Any number of things may have been a challenge to you and be the source of a good story to inspire others. Remember, we want to connect from a shared struggle and shared experience of injustice in order to bring joy and hope that enables action. We may want to share our scars, not expose our wounds. Please be mindful of taking care of yourself and choosing challenges that show your human vulnerability, while making you feel powerful as you share them.

What is a Story of Self?

Public narrative combines a story of self, a story of us, and a story of now

A “story of self” communicates the values that called you to lead in this way, in this place, at this time.

Each of us has compelling stories to tell about how we got here. In some cases, our values have been shaped by choices others, such as parents, friends, and teachers, have made. We have chosen how to deal with loss, even as we have found access to hope. Our choices have shaped our own life path: we dealt with challenges as children, adolescents, young people, found our way to a calling, responded to the needs, demands, and gifts of others, and confronted leadership challenges in places of worship, schools, communities, work.

A “story of us” communicates shared values that anchor your community. These are values that may be at risk, and may also be sources of hope.

We tell more “stories of us” in our daily lives than any other kind of story. They’re the “do you remember when” moments at a family dinner; the “what about the time that” moments after a concert; or simply the tales we exchange with friends. Just like any good story, “stories of us” recount moments when individuals, a group, a community, an organization, a movement, experienced a shared challenge, choice, and outcome that is expressive of shared values. They may be founding moments, moments of crisis, of triumph, disaster, of resilience, and of humor. To tell the “story of us” powerfully, focus on telling specific stories about specific people at specific times that can remind everyone of – or call everyone’s attention to – the values you share against which the challenges in the world can be measured. A “story of us” is “experiential” in that it creates an experience of shared values. It is not “categorical” – it’s not a story described by certain traits, characteristics, or identity markers. Telling a good story of us requires the *courage of empathy*. It demands we consider the experience of others deeply enough to take a chance of articulating that experience.

A “story of now” communicates an urgent challenge you are calling on your community to join you in acting on now.

A “story of now” requires telling stories that bring the urgency of the challenge you face alive. It may be urgent because of a need for change that cannot be denied, or urgent because of a moment of opportunity to make change that may not return. At the intersection of the urgency of challenge and the promise of hope is a choice that must be made – to act, or not to act; to act in one way, or in another. The hope in the “story of now” resides not somewhere in a distant future but in the sense of possibility in a pathway to action. Telling a good “story of now” requires the *courage of imagination*. It calls attention both to the pain of the world and also to the possibility for a better future.

Exercises

Telling Stories: Story of Self

- | | |
|---|---------|
| 1. Video Review: Connecting Self, Us, Now (Public Narrative) | Page 23 |
| 2. Worksheet: Drafting your Story of Self | Page 24 |
| 3. Teamwork: Coaching a Story of Self | Page 25 |

For Further Reflection

We all live very rich and complex lives with many challenges, many choices, and many outcomes of both failure and success. That means we can never tell our whole life story in 2 minutes. Your challenge is to learn to interpret our life stories as a practice, so that we can teach others based on reflection and interpretation of our own experiences and choose stories to tell from our own lives based on what's appropriate in each unique situation.

Take time to reflect on your own public story, beginning with your story of self. You may go back as far as your parents or grandparents, or you may start with your most recent organizing and keep asking yourself why in particular you got involved when you did. Focus on challenges you had to face, the choices you made about how to deal with those challenges, and the satisfactions – or frustrations – you experienced. Why did you make those choices? Why did you do one thing and not the other? **Keep asking yourself why.** What did you learn from reflecting on these moments of challenge, choice, and outcome? How do they feel – and why do they feel that? Do they teach you anything about yourself, about your family, about your peers, your community, your nation, your world around you and about what really matters to you? What about these stories was so intriguing? Which elements offered real perspective into your own life? What brings you to this movement in this campaign? When did you decide to work on improving access sexual rights, for instance? Why? When did you decide to volunteer? Why?

Many of us active in public leadership have stories of both loss and hope. If we did not have stories of loss, we would not understand that loss is a part of the world and we would have no reason to try to fix it. But we also have stories of hope. Otherwise, we wouldn't be trying to fix it.

A good public story is drawn from the series of choice points that structure the “plot” of your life – the **challenges** you faced, **choices** you made, and **outcomes** you experienced.

Challenge: Why did you feel it was a challenge? What was so challenging about it? Why was it *your* challenge?

Choice: Why did you make the choice you did? Where did you get the courage – or not? Where did you get the hope – or not? How did it feel?

Outcome: How did the outcome feel? Why did it feel that way? What did it teach you? What do you want to teach us? How do you want us to feel?

What is a Story of Us?

You tell a story of self to enable others to “get you” so they can experience the values that call you to public life.

You tell a “story of us” to enable them to “get each other” and to experience the values they share. That experience can inspire people to act together, find courage in each other, and find hope in their solidarity.

In other words, the “us” that the storyteller brings alive is based less on what “category” describes them (race, gender, language, etc.), and is instead focused on the shared values that are rooted in our common experience. This is an “experiential us.” By learning to tell a “story of us”, you can bring those values alive as a source of solidarity, hope, and motivation to act.

Crafting a Story of Us

One way people develop their sense of “usness” is by sharing stories that celebrate the values they share. They may share stories of family, community, faith tradition, school life, profession, movements, organizational happenings, national experience, generational moments, cultural events, or even global occurrences. But, as stories, they’re about our experience of these moments, challenges we faced, obstacles we overcame (or didn’t), values we tested or that tested us, and the lessons we learned that made us who we are.

The character in the Story of Us is the people you are motivating to act

Our story of self is interwoven with stories we share with others through communities we are a part of, which in turn have stories of their own. These include stories of our family, community, faith tradition, school, profession, movements, organizations, nations and, perhaps world. It is through shared stories that we establish the identities and express the values of the communities in which we participate (family, faith, nation) and of new communities we are forming (new social movements, new organizations, new neighborhoods). Telling a “story of us” requires learning how to put into narrative form experiences the “us” in the room share and that “lift up” the values you will be challenging them to act on. This story of us may well reach beyond the people in the room. It can draw in a wider range of experience, and larger stories of us. However, remember that for a story of us to be effective in your organizing, it must be rooted in the experience of the people in the room.

The Story of Us in the Room

Although the reach of a story of us may extend far beyond “people in the room”, it becomes real only in the experience of the “people in the room” – or not. The test is simple. Ask yourself as you heard this story, did your group begin to feel like an us? The experience of shared values may grow out of stories of historic moments we remember or have heard about. They might be stories of life events like having children, stories of finding out you were accepted to this program, stories of what happened the first time your group met – or of last night, or this morning. Like all stories, the more detailed, the more specific, and the more visual it is, the more effective it will be. What were the names of the people involved? What did they look like? How were they different? Sometimes stories of us emphasize obvious differences in race, religion, gender, age, for example, all while highlighting commonality of values or common purpose.

Linking Story of Self and Story of Us

A story of self tells people who you are and why you are called to do the work that you are doing. The goal is for them to “get you”, to connect with you. Since organizing is about building power with others for shared action, your public narrative also needs to tell a story of the values shared by the people you hope to move to collective action. The test of a story of us is whether they “get” their connection with each other.

Narrative Structure: Challenge, Choice, Outcome

Remember the story structure we introduced in telling your Story of Self?

Just like in your Story of Self, your Story of Us has a clear challenge, choice, and outcome:

The Challenge: The challenges your community has faced in the past, or faces now (made real with stories, images, and details, not statistics).

The Outcome (hope): Stories with vivid images that remind your community of what you’ve achieved. Your own experiences of hope, experiences that point to your future.

The Choice: For a story to be a story, it centers on a “choice”. In a story of us, that choice is one that met challenge with action, and thus can be a source of hope. Founding stories recount choices made by those who initiated the community, enabling us to experience the values that motivated them.

Stories of us can begin to shift power relationships by building new community and new capacity

Often after we've heard others' stories of self and we've started building relationships together, we can discover we face similar challenges that are rooted in very deep systems of power inequality. Learning to tell stories of us is a way to begin to join our stories together and acknowledge those shared challenges and the roots of the problem as a community. However, a good story of us doesn't just convey the root of our challenges. It also lifts our community. You can do this by sharing stories of even small successes. Those stories give us hope that if we come together and act as a community, we can uproot some of the underlying causes of our suffering.

Exercises

Telling Stories: Story of Us

- 4. **Worksheet:** Developing your Story of Us Page 27
- 5. **Worksheet:** Coaching your teammates' Stories of Us Page 29

What is a Story of Now?

The Story of Now describes an urgent choice faced by the "us" you hope to mobilize to act. It's a challenging vision of what will happen if we do not act. It's a hopeful vision of what could be if we do act. And it's a call to commit to the action required. A story of now makes the bridge from story (why we should act) to strategy (how we can act effectively).

Your story of self shared why you were called to your mission. Your story of us shared who you will call on to join you in that mission. A story of now articulates the urgent choice the "us" now faces and which requires action. The "character" in a story of now is you, the people in the room with you, and the broader community you hope to engage in action.⁷

7 In Washington DC, August 23, 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King told a story of what he called the "fierce urgency of now". Although we all recall his vision or dream of what America could be, we often forget the action he called for was urgent because of the "nightmare" of racial oppression, which was the result of white America's failure to make good on its "promissory note" to African-Americans. This debt, he argued, could no longer be postponed. If we did not act now, we could never realize the dream.

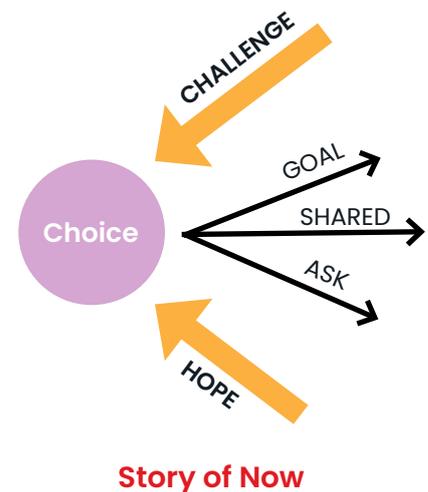
In a story of now, the **story and strategy** overlap. This is because a **key element in hope is a strategy**. We need a credible vision of **how to get from here to there**. Similarly, a key element in strategy is a source of hope and a sense of possibility. The “choice” we offer must be more than “we must all choose to be better people” or “choose to do any one of this list of 53 things”, or “go to x website and click”. A meaningful choice requires action we can take now, action we can take together, and an outcome we could collectively achieve.

The Elements of a Story of Now

The Challenge: The challenge we are facing now (made real through stories, not just statistics)

The Outcome: A plausible pathway to action, a sense of the “possible”, of what “could be” if we act now

The Choice: A choice to commit to that pathway to action that each person in your audience can make right now.



Why it matters

The choice we’re called on to make is to act now. Leaders who only describe problems but fail to identify a way to act to address the problem simply aren’t very good leaders. If you are called to address a real challenge – a challenge so urgent you have motivated us to face it as well – then you also have a responsibility to invite us to join you in action that has some chance of success. **A “story of now” is not simply a call to make a choice to act. It is a call to “hopeful” action.**

Putting It All Together: Linking Public Narrative

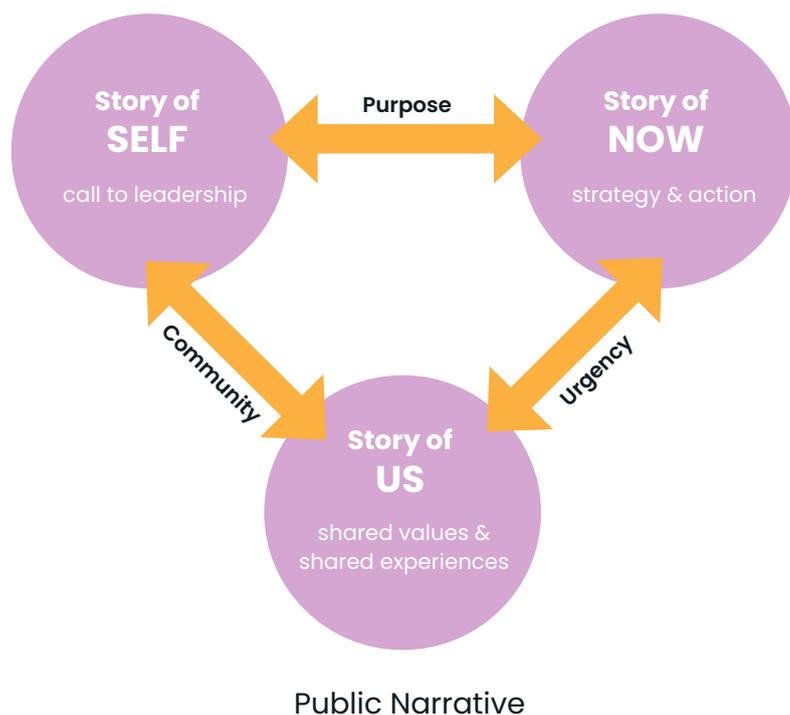
If I am not for myself, who will be for me? (Self)

When I am only for myself, what am I? (Us)

If not now, when? (Now) ⁸

As Rabbi Hillel's powerful words suggest, to stand for yourself is the first step. But it is insufficient on its own. You must find or create a community to stand with, and that community must begin acting with you now. To combine the stories of self, us and now, you have to find the link between why you are called to this mission, why your community is called to this mission, and what your mission calls on us to do now.

That linking may require you to continually rethink the stories of self, us, and now that you are working on.



Storytelling is a dynamic, non-linear process

Each time you tell your story you will adapt it in order to make yourself clearer, to adjust to a different audience, or to locate yourself in a different context. As you develop a story of us, you may find you want to alter your story of self, especially as you begin to see the relationship between the two more clearly. Similarly, as you develop a story of now, you may find it affects what went before. As you go back to reconsider what went before, you may find it alters your story of now.

⁸ Hillel (Pirke Avot, 1:14)

Storytelling takes practice

Our goal is not to leave with a final “script” of your public narrative that you will use over and over again. The goal is to help you learn a process by which you can generate your narrative over and over and over again – when, where, and how you need to in order to motivate yourself and others to specific, strategic action.

Exercises

Telling Stories

6. **Teamwork:** Link Self/Us/Now and ask for Commitment

Page 30

7. **Worksheet:** Link Self/Us/Now

Page 32



Video review: Telling Stories

Connecting Self, Us, Now (Public Narrative)

We'll be watching five minutes of James Croft's Linked Public Narrative. As you watch it, focus on the elements of SELF – US – NOW that you hear in his story.

TRIGGER WARNING: explicit reference to bullying, abuse, violence and suicide:

WATCH VIDEO HERE (English)

Go to <https://www.youtube.com/user/GanzOrganizing> and search channel videos for "6.12 seconds"

SELF	US	NOW
What experiences shaped his values? Whose choices were they? Why are they stories?	Who is the "us" to whom he appeals? What moments of choice does he recall? What are the values?	What challenges to those values does he describe? What's the source of hope? In what action does he ask us to join?

1. Why does James Croft begin as he does?
2. What challenge, choice, and outcome are at the core of each story he tells?
3. What details, images, moments do these stories bring alive?
4. What values do these stories communicate?

Challenge	Choice	Outcome	Details	Values
What experiences shaped his values? What details and images bring his challenge alive?	What moments of choice does he recall?	Where does he locate the source of hope? What is the outcome of his choices?	What details give you precise images that allow you to imagine the story?	What are the values?



Worksheet: Telling Stories

Drafting your Story of Self

Before you decide what part of your story to tell, think about these questions:

1. Why am I called to bodily autonomy and sexual rights leadership?
2. Why am I called to this movement?
3. What values move me to act?
4. How might they inspire others to similar action?
5. What stories can I tell from my own life about specific people or events that would **show** (rather than tell) how I learned or acted on those values?
6. What are the **experiences** in my life that have shaped the values that call me to leadership?

FAMILY & CHILDHOOD	LIFE CHOICES	ORGANIZING EXPERIENCE
Parents/Family Growing Up Experiences Your community Role Models School	School/Career Partner/Family Hobbies/Interests/Talents Experiences finding Passion Experiences overcoming challenge	First experience of organizing Community activism Connection to key books or people Role Models

Think about the **challenge**, **choice** and **outcome** in your story. The outcome might be what you learned, in addition to what happened. **Try drawing pictures here instead of words.** Powerful stories leave your listeners with images in their minds that shape their understanding of you and your calling. Remember, articulating the **decisions** you make **in the face of challenges** ultimately communicates your **values**.

CHALLENGE	CHOICE	OUTCOME



Teamwork: Telling Stories

Coaching a Story of Self

Remember to balance both positive and constructive critical feedback. The purpose of coaching is to listen to the **way** stories are told and think of ways that the storytelling could be improved.

DON'T simply offer vague “feel good” comments. (“That was a really great story!”)

DO coach each other on the following points:

THE CHALLENGE: What were the specific challenges the storyteller faced? Did the storyteller paint a vivid picture of those challenges?

“When you described _____, I got a clear picture of the challenge.”

“I understood the challenge to be _____. Is that what you intended?”

“The challenge wasn’t clear. How would you describe _____?”

THE CHOICE: Was there a clear choice that was made in response to each challenge? How did the choice make you feel? (Hopeful? Angry?)

“To me, the choice you made was _____, and it made me feel _____.”

“It would be helpful if you focused on the moment you made a choice.”

THE OUTCOME: What was the specific outcome that resulted from each choice? What does that outcome teach us?

“I understood the outcome to be _____, and it teaches me _____. But how does it relate to your work now?”

THE VALUES: Could you identify what this person’s values are and where they came from? How? How did the story make you feel?

“Your story made me feel _____ because _____.”

“It’s clear from your story that you value _____; but it could be even clearer if you told a story about where that value comes from.”

DETAILS: Were there sections of the story that had especially good details or images (e.g. sights, sounds, smells, or emotions of the moment)?

“The image of _____ really helped me identify with what you were feeling.”

“Try telling more details about _____ so we can imagine what you were experiencing.”

Coaching Your Team's "Story of Self": As you hear each other's stories, keeping track of the details of each person's story will help you to provide feedback and remember details about people on your team later. Use the grid below to track your team's stories in words or images. Take 2 minutes each to share your story of self. Person 1 shares their story of self, person 2 coaches them for 2 minutes, person 3 observes and shared feedback on the coaching for 1 minute.

Name	Values	Challenge	Choice	Outcome



Worksheet: Telling Stories

Developing your Story of Us

The purpose of the story of us is to create a sense of community among individuals who may or may not yet see themselves as a community. It gives people hope that they can make a difference. It builds on shared experiences and the outcomes of previous actions to establish the context in which to take future action. Your goal here is to tell a story that evokes the values you and your audience share. It shows why we, “us”, are called to take responsibility for action now.

Your story of us may focus on what we’ve already done together (common experiences), challenges we’ve already faced, and outcomes we’ve achieved. It may be a story of our shared community leader and the challenges they faced and outcomes they’ve achieved. Hearing how we’ve met challenges in the past gives us hope that we can face new challenges together.

Brainstorm all the stories you know about your audience and your collective story and experience. Your story of us may change each time you are talking to a different group of people as you create new community with them.

As a group, brainstorm through the following questions (5 min):

- Which specific **shared experiences** has this community experienced as meaningful moments? These should be events (not characteristics) that your group feels connected around.
- Which specific **shared values** are expressed in these shared experiences? Around which shared values do you hope to build a public narrative?
- What are the **challenges** in these stories?
- What are the sources of **hope** in these stories?

Individual Work

Now, on your own, choose a few of the stories you brainstormed above to flesh out in vivid detail. Remember, you can use this space to draw pictures instead of writing words, to help you think about where to add detail and nuance in your story. (5 min.)

CHALLENGE	CHOICE	OUTCOME
What was the challenge we faced? What’s the root of that challenge?	What specific choice did we make? What action did we take?	What happened as a result of our choice? What hope can it give us?

EACH STORY TELLER SHOULD:

SELF: Start your story in a couple of sentences (Examples of sentences that could create the space for an US:

I care about _____ because of my own lived experience, before I came here, I thought I was alone.

US: Take 2 minutes to tell your story of US as it relates to the people you are talking with that connects to your shared values. Create the space for an ASK by evoking a shared value, experience, urgency.

Coaching Tips: Story Of Us

Remember to start with positive feedback FIRST and then move into what could be improved.

Focus on asking questions instead of giving advice. The purpose is to coach, not judge or criticize so listen fully to offer ways that the storytelling could be improved.

Coaching Questions

1. INTERWEAVING SELF AND US: Did the story of self-relate to the story of us? If so, what was the common thread?

2. THE US: Who is the “us” in the story? Do you feel included in the “us”?

“Could you focus more on the experiences we, as a small group, shared today that reflect our values? For instance, _____.”

3. THE CHALLENGE: What were the specific challenges the storyteller faced? How were those challenges made vivid?

“I understood the challenge to be _____. Is that what you intended?”

4. THE CHOICE: Was there a clear choice that was made in response to each challenge? How did the choice make you feel? (Hopeful? Angry?)

“To me, the choice you made was _____, and it made me feel _____.”

5. THE OUTCOME: What was the specific outcome that resulted from each choice? What does that outcome teach us?

“I understood the outcome to be _____, and it taught me _____.”

6. THE VALUES: Could you identify what this community’s values are and how this community has acted on those values in the past? How?

“Your story made me see that we value _____ because _____.”

7. DETAILS: Were there sections of the story that had especially good details or images (e.g. sights, sounds, smells, or emotions of the moment)?

“The image of _____ really helped me feel what you were feeling.”



Worksheet: Telling Stories

Coaching your teammates' Stories of Us

Record feedback/comments from your team members on your story here:

Coaching your team's "Story of Us": As you hear each other's stories, keep track of the details of each person's story. This will help you to provide feedback and remember details about people on your team later. Use the grid below to track your team's stories.

Name	Values	Challenge	Choice	Outcome



Teamwork: Telling Stories

Link Self/Us/Now and ask for Commitment

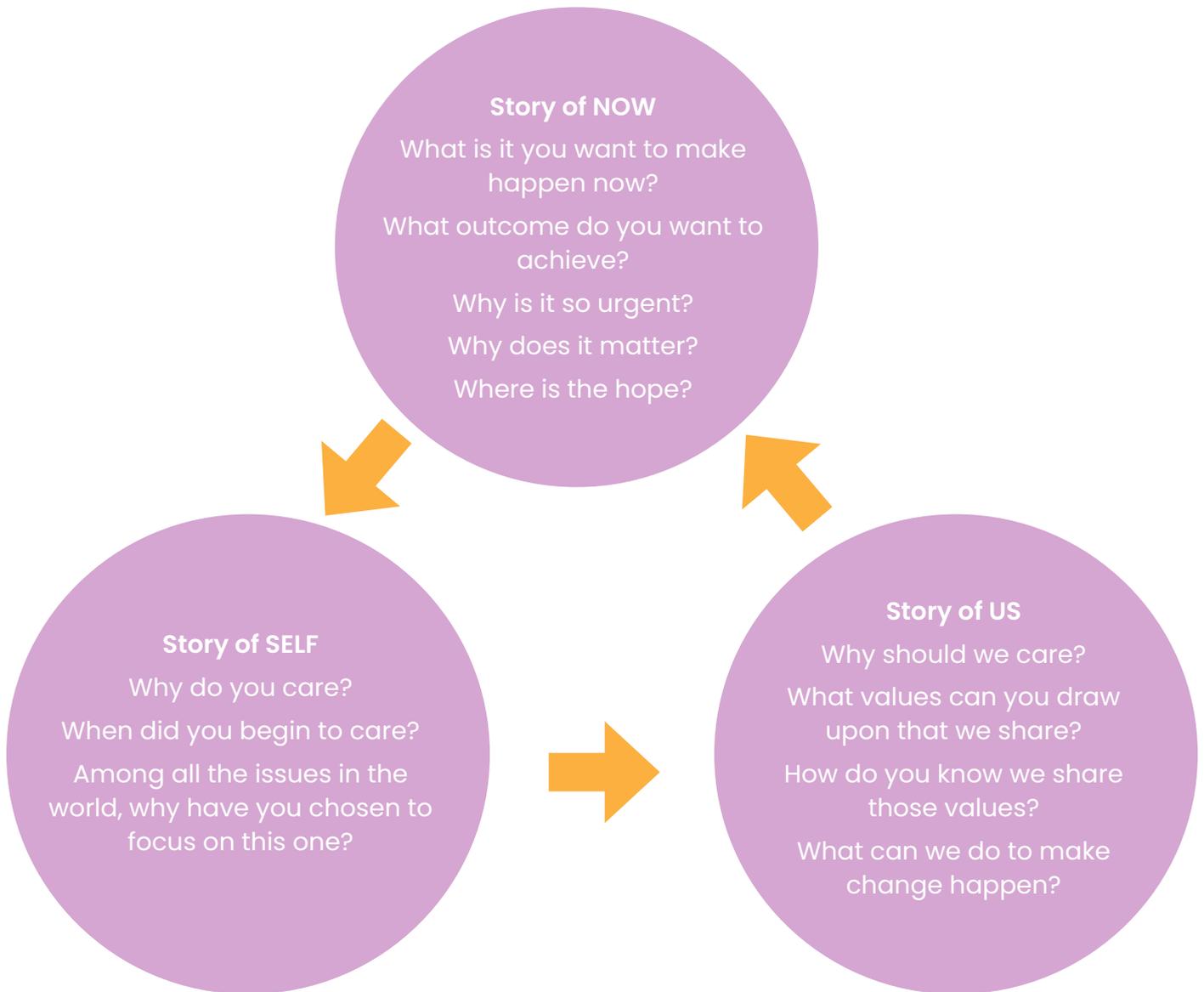
Goals

- Learn how integrate your **stories** of **self/us/now** into a public narrative
- Ask for **commitments** by articulating a specific **choice point** for others to make. It's more than an "ask." *It's a choice about whether someone's going to stay on the sidelines or dive in and act on their values. It's an opportunity for them to join with you.*

Agenda

TOTAL TIME: 45 min.

1	Gather in your team. Nominate one person to be a timekeeper .	2 min.
2	Take some time as individuals to silently develop your "Public Narrative." Link your story of now with a story of self and story of us. Use the worksheet that follows.	5 min.
3	As a team, go around your group to practice your full public narrative. Each person has 3 minutes to tell his/her public narrative, with 2 minutes for feedback. Be sure you end your public narrative by asking for a clear commitment that is rooted in your team's project and your strategy. ** NOTE: You have 3 minutes to tell your story. Stick to this limit. Make sure the timekeeper cuts you off. It encourages focus and ensures everyone has a chance.	30 min.
4	As a team, go around your group to do a round of appreciations . Each person has up to 1 minute to appreciate the teammate sitting to her or his left for a contribution they have made or a moment you have shared.	5 min.
5	Silent reflection , notes to improve your public narrative.	3 min.





Worksheet: Telling Stories

Link Self/Us/Now

Story of Self

What stories can you tell about the experiences and/or values that call you to take leadership? Think of challenges you faced, choices you made, and the outcomes in those experiences.

in and act on their values. It's an opportunity for them to join with you.

Story of Us

What stories highlight the shared values and experiences of the people you're speaking to? Think of specific collective challenges you faced as a community, the collective choices you made, and the outcomes of those experiences.

Story of Now

What stories communicate the urgent challenges that your community faces?

What stories can offer your community a sense of hope?

Linking Chart

As you begin developing your linked public narrative, remember your **values** are what link the different pieces of your story together. Make sure you communicate clear and consistent values throughout. Remember to include **self, us** and **now**, as well as **challenge, choice**, and **outcome**. Once you've crafted your linked narrative, you should be able to mark an "X" in each box below.

	CHALLENGE	CHOICE	OUTCOME
Self			
Us			
Now			
Clear and consistent values? Are values present throughout?			

Coaching Tips for Public Narrative

DON'T simply offer vague “feel good” comments. (“That was a really great story!”)

DO coach each other on the following points:

1. THE CHALLENGE: What is the specific challenge we face now? Did the storyteller paint a vivid and urgent picture of it? What details might make it even more vivid and urgent?

“The challenge wasn’t urgent enough. Why not mention _____?”

2. THE OUTCOME: What is the specific outcome if we act together? Is there a clear and hopeful vision of how the future can be different if we act now?

“The outcome could be even more hopeful if you described _____.”

3. THE CHOICE: Is there a clear choice that we are being asked to make in response to the challenge? How did the choice make you feel? (Hopeful?)

“What exactly are you asking us to do? When should we do it? Where?”

4. VALUES: What values do you share with the storyteller? Does the story of now appeal to those values?

“Instead of telling us to care, it would be more effective if you showed us the choice to be made by illustrating the way in which you value _____.”

5. DETAILS: Were there sections of the story that had especially vivid details or images (e.g. sights, sounds, smells, or emotions)?

“The image of _____ really helped me identify with what you were feeling.”

“Try telling more details about _____ so we can relate to this shared experience.”

6. INTERWEAVING SELF, US AND NOW: Did the story of self and the story of us relate to the story of now? If so, what was the common thread? If not, what thread could the storyteller use to rethink the connections between self, us and now?

“The image of _____ really helped me identify with what you were feeling.”

“Try telling more details about _____ so we can relate to this shared experience.”

Coaching your team's public narrative

As you hear each other's public narratives, keep track of the details of each person's story. This will help you to provide feedback and remember details about people on your team later. Use the grid below to track your team's public narratives.

Name	Values	Self	Us	Now



Building Relationships

SheDecides.

Building Relationships

Organizing is based on relationships and creating mutual commitments to work together.

It is the process of association – not simply aggregation – that makes a whole greater than the sum of its parts.

Through association we can learn to recast our individual interests as common interests. We can identify the values we share and envision objectives that we can then use our combined resources to achieve. Because it makes us more likely to act to assert those interests, relationship building goes far beyond delivering a message, extracting a contribution, or soliciting a vote. Relationships built as a result of one-on-one meetings create the foundation of local campaign teams. They are rooted in commitments people make to each other, not simply commitment to an idea, task, or issue.

Our sisters at CREA have an interesting approach to building relationships and movement building. Their approach is very much aligned to **SheDecides**; belief in the power of creating safe and brave spaces where people can come together. CREA says:

“Movements are built by creating spaces where people can come together to think and speak radical thoughts and plan radical deeds to change their reality.”⁹

What Are Relationships?

Relationships are rooted in shared values

We can identify the values we share by learning each other’s stories – especially the “choice points” in our life journeys. The key is asking “why.” You can read more about this in the “**Telling Stories**” section.

Relationships grow out of exchanges of interests and resources

Your resources can address my interests and, in turn, my resources can address your interests. The key is identifying interests and resources. This means that relationships are driven as much by difference as by commonality. Our common interest may be as narrow as supporting each other in pursuit of our individual interest, provided they are not in conflict. Organizing relationships are not simply transactional. We’re not simply looking for someone to meet our “ask” at the end of a one-to-one meeting, house meeting, street gathering. We’re looking for people to join with us in long-term learning, growth, and action.

⁹ All about Movements, page 69: https://creaworld.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/All-About-Movements_Web.pdf

Relationships are created by commitment

An exchange becomes a relationship only when each party commits a portion of their most valuable resource to it: time. A commitment of time to the relationship gives it a future and, therefore, a past. Because we can all learn, grow, and change, the purposes that led us to form the relationship may change as well, offering possibilities for enriched exchange. In fact, the relationship itself may become a valued resource – what Robert Putnam calls “social capital.”¹⁰

Relationships involve constant attention and work

When nurtured over time, relationships become an important source of continual learning and development for the individuals and communities that make up your organizing campaign. They are also a great source for sustaining motivation and inspiration. If our long-term power and potential for growth comes more from voluntary commitment, then we need to invest significant time and intentionality in building the relationships that generate that commitment, both to each other and to the goals that bring us together. That requires transparent, open and mindful interaction.

Organizing Your Constituency

The real work of organizing is done with one’s **constituency**.

Organizing is about supporting a constituency to develop its power so it can assert its interests effectively – not only in this moment, but into the future. Organizers begin by building a foundation within their constituency.

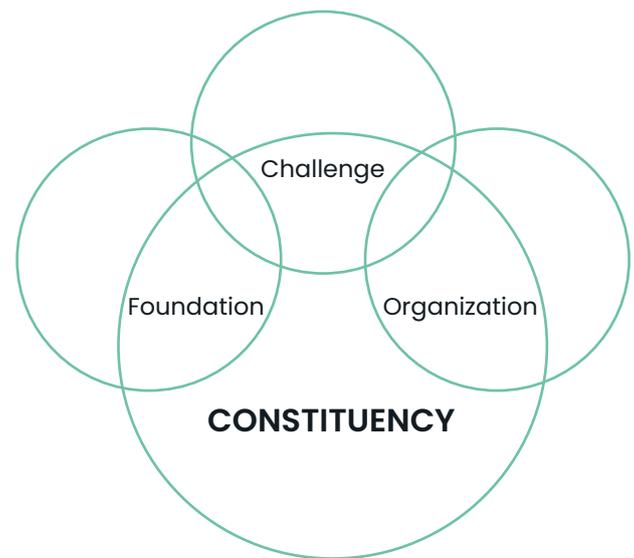
This usually requires one-on-one meetings to learn about people’s real concerns. From there, organizers can discern together the real sources of their problems, figure out power dynamics, and identify, recruit, and develop leadership.

A **campaign** is a process through which a constituency can organize itself to create the power it needs to achieve its goals. By turning their campaign efforts into an organization (by this we mean any kind of organizing structure, including a collective or movement, not an NGO), they will have the capacity to build on their successes into the future.

¹⁰ Putnam RD. The Prosperous Community: Social Capital and Public Life. The American Prospect. 1993;(13) :35-42.

We also organize as a campaign. This is a way of mobilizing time, resources and energy to achieve an outcome and treat time as an “arrow,” rather than a “cycle.”

Thinking of time as a “cycle” helps us to maintain routines, normal procedures, and manage admin such as our annual budgets, etc. Thinking of time as an “arrow” focuses on making change, on achieving specific outcomes, on focusing our efforts, and on moving forward. A campaign is time as an “arrow”. It is an intense stream of activity that begins with a foundational period, builds to a kick-off, continues with periodic peaks, culminates in a final peak, and is followed by a resolution. We will explore this further in the strategy section.



Why Build Relationships? Organizing vs. Mobilizing

Leadership begins with understanding yourself: your values, your motivation, your story.

But leadership is about supporting others to achieve purpose. The foundation of this kind of leadership is the relationships we build with others. Most importantly, it's the relationships we build with the people we can share leadership.

Leadership in organizing is based on relationships

This is a key difference between *mobilizing* and *organizing*. When we mobilize, we access and deploy a person's resources. Those might include their time to show up at a march or rally, their ability to “click” to sign a petition, their signature, or their money.

But when we organize, we build new relationships which, in turn, become a source not only of a particular resource, but of *leadership, commitment, imagination*, and, of course, *more relationships*.

In mobilizing, the “moment of truth” is when we ask, “can I count on you to be there, give me \$5, and sign the petition?”

In organizing the “moment of truth” is when two people have learned enough about each other's interests, resources, and values not only to make an “exchange”, but also to commit to working

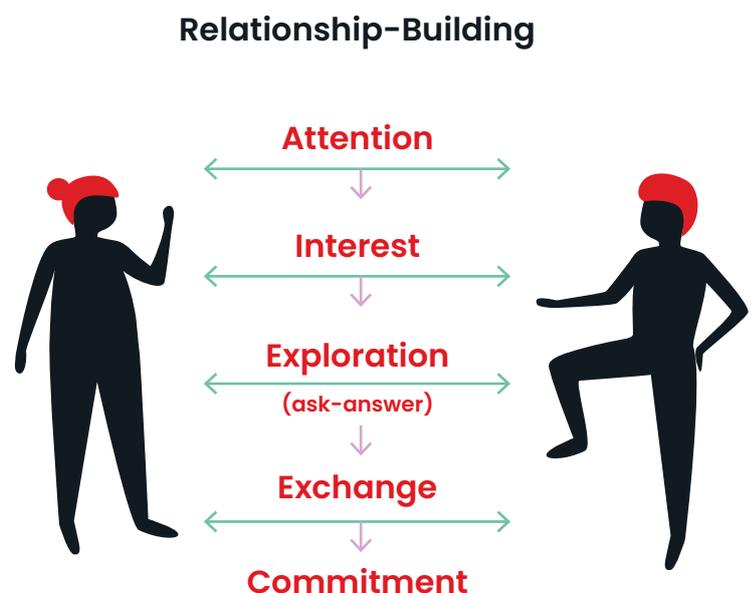
together on behalf of a common purpose. Those commitments then generate new teams, new networks, and new organizations that, in turn, can mobilize resources over and over and over again.

- 1. Identifying, recruiting, and developing leadership:** We build relationships with potential collaborators to explore values, learn about resources, discern common purpose, and find people we can share leadership responsibility with.
- 2. Building community:** Leaders continually reach out to others, form relationships with them, expand the circle of support, grow more resources that they can access, and recruit people who can then become leaders themselves. Leadership in organizing is adaptive, and happens with others. Every action in organizing should encompass identifying and building new leadership.
- 3. Turning resources into power:** Relationship building doesn't end when action starts. Commitment is how to access resources for organizing. This is especially true when you come up against competition, internal conflict, or external obstacles. Commitment is based on relationships and these must be constantly and intentionally nurtured. The more others find purpose in joining with you, the more they will commit resources that you may never have known they had. Resources in organizing are time, skills, connection, creativity, imagination, money, access to spaces of power, data, information, knowledge, labor... anything your constituency has that it is willing to turn into power to achieve its goals.

Building intentional relationships: The one-on-one meeting in organizing

One way to initiate intentional relationships is the one-on-one meeting. In organizing a one-on-one meeting can consist of five "acts":

Attention: We have to get another person's attention to conduct a one-on-one meeting. After getting acquainted, be as upfront as you can be about what your interest is in the meeting.



Interest: There must be a purpose or a goal in setting up a one-on-one meeting. It could range from “I’m starting a new network and thought you might be interested” to “I’m struggling with a problem and I think you could help” or “I know you have an interest in X so I’d like to discuss that with you.”

Exploration: Most of your one-on-one meeting will be devoted to exploration by asking probing questions to help you learn the other person’s values, interests, and resources. You will also be required to share enough of your own values, interests, and resources.

Exchange: We exchange resources in the meeting such as information, support, and insight. This creates the foundation for future exchanges.

Commitment: A successful one-on-one meeting ends with a commitment. Hopefully this will include meeting again. By scheduling a specific time for this follow-up meeting, you make it a real commitment. Remember, goal of the one-on-one in organizing is not to get someone to make a pledge, to give money, to commit his or her vote. The goal is to commit to continuing the relationship.

DO

Schedule a time to have this conversation (usually 30 to 60 minutes).

Plan to listen and ask questions.

Share public interests. The steps above may be useful.

Share experiences and deep motivations for your public interests.

Share a vision that articulates a shared set of interests for change.

Be clear about the ‘when and what’ of your next step together.

DON'T

Be unclear about purpose and length of conversation.

Try to persuade rather than listen and ask questions.

Chit chat about private interests.

Skip stories to “get to the point”

Miss the opportunity to share ideas about how things can change.

End the conversation without a clear plan for the next steps.

Exercise: Building Relationships

1. **Worksheet:** One-on-One Guide

Page 42



Worksheet: Building Relationships

One-on-One Guide

The goal is to explore why your meeting partner has been called to do this work. Probe with “why?” questions to get at **choice points** and specific experiences that shaped their life. Listen to your partner’s story for the **motivations** and the resources they **bring to the space**. Share your story. Be specific.

Avoid talking about issues like bodily autonomy and sexual rights justice in an abstract or detached way. **Talk about why you both care about this concrete action/project/local issue**. This may be because of your own life experiences or the specific experiences of people you care about.

Don’t forget the most important part of a one-on-one: *the commitment*. Try to reach a specific commitment on how you can support each other.

Use these questions as a background guide. You don’t need to ask them directly, but you can use them to look for answers in the conversation:

- What values do we share?
- What interests could our relationship support?
- What resources could we contribute to each other’s interests?
- When will we meet again to take action and to keep building this relationship?

Story

What’s your family/community story? What in your life brought you here today?

Hope

What motivates you to act to organize in your community? What’s your vision of how things could be different if we work together?

Challenges

What keeps you from action? What do you fear? What do you want to learn?

Leadership Qualities

What skills do you have? How do you lead others already in your life? What would you be willing to bring to this movement?

Shared values, interests and resources worksheet

When you have finished your 1:1, write down your shared values, interests, and resources (this includes skills, time, connections).

Common Values	Common Interests	Common Resources
Next meeting:		

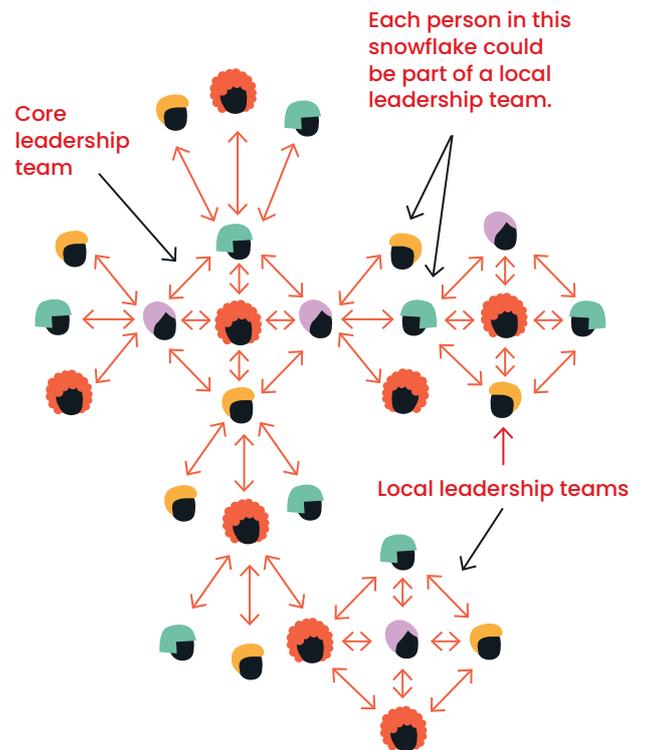


Structuring Teams

Structuring Teams

A team leadership structure can enable organizing that grows stronger through collaborative and cascading leadership development.

Volunteer efforts often flounder due to a failure to develop reliable, consistent, and creative individual leaders. Structured leadership teams encourage stability, motivation, creativity, and accountability – and they use volunteer time, skills, and effort effectively. They create a structure within which energized volunteers can accomplish challenging work. Successful teams can achieve the goals they set for themselves, grow more effective as a team over time, and enable the growth, development and learning of their individual members. Effective leadership teams must be bounded, stable, and diverse. They must agree on a shared purpose, clear norms, and specific roles.



Why do leadership teams matter?

The most effective leaders create teams that work with them and lead with them. A leadership team offers a structured way to work together interdependently, with each person taking on a leadership role during a specific part of the team’s activity. At their best, leadership teams recognize and put to productive use the unique talents of the individuals who make up the team.

Team structures also help create strategic capacity. This is the ability to creatively strategize the ways that can produce more vibrant, engaging strategy than any individual could create alone. In the Obama campaign, the field structure created multiple layers of leadership teams to engage people creatively and strategically at all levels of the campaign. Each state had a state leadership team that coordinated regional leadership teams (of Regional Directors and Organizers), who in turn coordinated local neighborhood leadership teams of volunteer leaders.

At every level the people on leadership teams had a clear mission with clear goals and the ability to strategize creatively together about how to carry out their mission and meet their goals. This structure created multiple points of entry for volunteers, and multiple opportunities to learn and to exercise leadership.

Leadership teams provide a foundation. From this foundation, an organization can expand its reach. Once a team is formed, systems can be created to establish a rhythm of regular meetings, clear decisions, and visible accountability. This increases the organization's effectiveness. One person alone cannot organize 500 people. It is built by finding people willing and able to commit to helping build it and creating relationships and a solid structure from which it can be built.

Team Stages

Teams aren't created as perfect, fully functioning snowflakes. Rather, they go through different phases of growth and learning, and inevitably experience growing pains along the way.

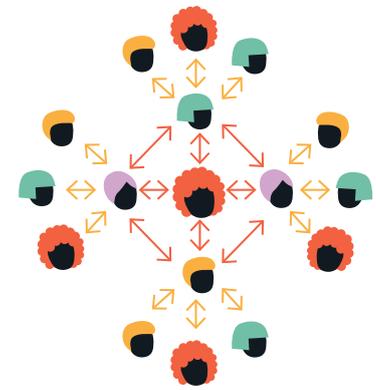
Phase 1: Potential – At this stage, the 'team' is in its infancy. A few excited volunteers are eager to do more, but people at this stage have limited or no involvement beyond this interest. An organizer's role is to develop this team to Phase 2 as soon as possible. To do so, the organizer will network and recruit within the community by scheduling 1:1 meetings. The organizer will organize events to meet and schedule potential new team members.

Phase 2: Team Formation – At this stage, the 'team' has a local team leader (e.g. a community organizer) but no other organizers. During this phase, the team leader has to work to start recruiting team members and begin moving them up the ladder of engagement until they become organizers. Note that this phase usually takes the longest.

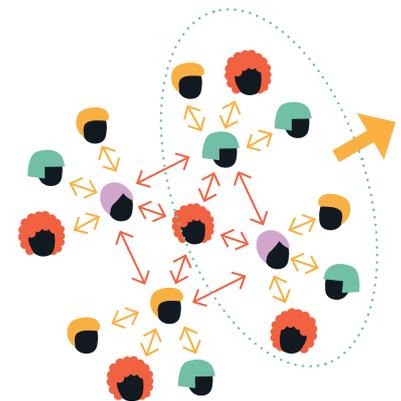
Phase 3: Team – At this stage, the team has one team leader and at least one other organizer. Now, the team is official and it needs to grow to increase its potential. As more people attend events and join the team, the team grows as the leaders test, escalate, and make hard asks. The challenge for organizers in this phase is to grow sustainably – that is, without growing too quickly and neglecting members of the existing team. In this phase, you must continue to invest time and resources into testing and escalating individuals that deliver. In other words, don't get hung up on people who don't show up; focus on those that do.



Phase 4: Developed Team – At this stage, the team is efficient and well-established. It has at least four core organizers, including the team leader. If the team follows the ladder of engagement approach, it will grow into a bigger and more efficient snowflake over time.



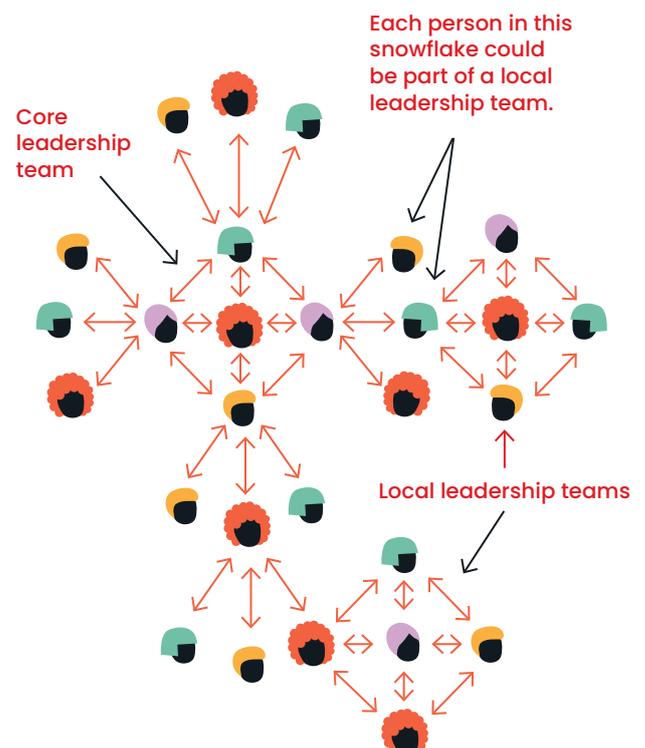
Phase 5: Team Transformation – At this stage, the team has grown to its fullest potential and can multiply into more teams. Organizers may start training existing team members to start new teams in other neighbourhoods or regions (also known as “turfs”). Teams may split in two, with one half moving into new turf to start a team there. Organizers must be intentional and thoughtful in supporting the transformation process, as this can be a complicated time for teams and strong emotions amongst team members could come up. Above all, remember that effective teams are bolstered by strong relationships, and that in the snowflake model, leadership is distributed, and organizers are committed to developing the leadership capacity of others.



The practise of coaching is the key means by which organizers in the snowflake develop leadership. If you would like **SheDecides** to develop resources on what coaching in organizing is and how to practise your coaching skills, please let us know [here](#).

Distributed leadership: core and local leadership teams

In the snowflake model, decision-making responsibility is decentralized whenever possible. The core leadership team ensures the whole organization is coherent and effectively moving in the same direction towards long-term goals. Local leadership teams ensure the organization is flexible, effectively delivering on short-term objectives. Everyone is responsible for strategizing, ongoing learning, and identifying and growing new leaders and resources. The core leadership team devises strategy, while local leadership teams test that strategy on the ground. They adapt it locally and provide feedback to improve organization-wide strategy.



A sustainable number of relationships

In the snowflake model, each person has a sustainable number of relationships. While you are likely to interact with many people in your organizing work, it's important to focus on maintaining relationships with those on your team (one way to do this is through regular team meetings or maintenance 1:1 meetings). As a general rule, if you are organizing full-time (i.e. committing 40 hours/week), then you can maintain up to ten relationships. If you are organizing part time, as is the case for the vast majority of grassroots organizers, you can maintain up to five relationships.

Mutual accountability

Notice how in the diagram the arrows point both ways. The snowflake model doesn't operate as a hierarchy, with managers delegating tasks in a top-down way and expecting results. Rather, team members are accountable to each other, mutually agree on tasks, and expect results from and provide support to each other. Someone within the core leadership team may assign a local leadership team with a task, but someone within a local leadership team is just as likely to assign the core leadership team with a task.

Clearly defined roles and responsibilities

Everyone in a team has a specific role with clearly defined responsibilities. While the team works together towards common goals, every task should be assigned to a specific team member(s) and each team member should clearly understand their responsibilities. Roles can vary based on the strategy and tactics.

Capacity for exponential growth

Because leadership in the snowflake is distributed into many small teams, and because the model is based on leadership development, the snowflake model has the capacity for exponential growth. Teams add more people, and those people break off and form their own teams, and those teams form new teams, and so on. Therefore, it may take three months to grow from five to 25 people, but in the the next three months you could grow to 125 people, and three months later 625 people, and so on. The size of a team and its growth rate will vary from campaign to campaign. For instance, teams working in the snowflake model structure have ranged in size from two or three people running a local campaign to teams of approximately 10,000 people in one state in a nationwide electoral campaign. That said, if implemented properly, the snowflake model has the capacity to get big, and get big fast.

So why don't people always work in teams?

We have all been part of volunteer teams that have not worked well. They fall into factions, they alienate each other, or all the work falls on one person. Some aim to keep the pond small so they can feel like big fish. When this happens, it's easy to come to the conclusion: "I'll just do it on my own; I hate meetings, just tell me what to do; I don't want any responsibility; just give me stamps to lick". There's just one problem: we can't become powerful enough to do what we need to do if we can't even work together to build campaigns that lead to us taking action.

The challenge is to create conditions for our leadership teams that are more likely to generate successful collaboration and strategic action. When groups of people come together, conflict is always present. Effective teams are structured in a way to channel that conflict in productive ways, allowing the team to achieve the goals it needs to win.

Three measures of an effective team:

1. **OUTPUT (WORLD):** The success of your team in taking the action required to achieve its valued goals: winning the game, winning the campaign, putting on the play, etc.
2. **CAPACITY (TEAM):** Over time your team is learning how to work more effectively as a team, and developing more leadership.
3. **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT (INDIVIDUAL):** Individuals who participate on your team learn and grow as a result of their participation.

Three conditions that make for a "real" team

Your team is **bounded**.

You can name the people on it. Members don't come and go, and whoever shows up doesn't have the automatic right to participate in the team. The most highly effective teams have no more than 4-8 members.

Your team is **stable**.

It meets regularly and it's not a different, random group of people at every meeting. Membership of the team remains constant long enough that the team learns to work together, and that collaboration gets better over time. Each member is fully committed to be on the team and commits consistent time and effort to it.

Your team is **interdependent.**

As on an athletic team, a string quartet, or an airplane cabin crew, the contribution that each person makes is critical to the success of the whole. Team members have a vital interest in each other's success, looking for ways to offer support.

Three steps to launching an effective team: purpose, ground rules, and roles

You have a **shared – and engaging – purpose.**

You are clear on what you have created your team to do (purpose), who you will be doing it with (constituency), and what kinds of activities your team will participate in. The work you have to do is readily understood, it's challenging, it matters and you know why it matters. Team members need to be able to articulate for themselves and others this "purpose."

You have created **clear interdependent roles.**

Each team member must have their own responsibility. This is their own "chunk" of the work and the success of the whole depends on each member carrying out that work. No one is carrying out activity in a silo that's secretive to others. A good team will have a diversity of identities, experiences and opinions, ensuring that everyone is bringing the most possible to the table.

Your team has **explicit ground rules.**

Your team sets clear expectations for how to govern itself in your work together. You will need to decide how you will manage meetings, regular communication, decisions, and commitments. Most importantly, you will need to decide how you will correct ground-rule violations, so they remain real ground rules. Teams with explicit operating rules are more likely to achieve their goals. Some team norms are operational, such as deciding how often you will meet, or how you will share and store documents, or how you will communicate with people outside the team. Others address expectations for member interaction with each other. Initial norms guide your team in its early stages as members learn how to work together. Norms can be refined through regular group review of how well the team is doing.

The Ladder of Engagement: Recruiting organizers

The path from interested supporter to organizer does not happen overnight. Rather, it involves a supporter being recruited, tested, and escalated into roles that require progressively more commitment and skills. In order to grow and take on more leadership, our people must demonstrate that they have the ability to perform the roles of each position.

As an organizer, it's your job to identify and develop leadership in others. We call this process – whereby individuals take on more and more leadership – the “ladder of engagement.” Here's an example of an organizing ladder of engagement (note that your ladder might look different depending on your campaign):

- 1. Supporter:** Individual supports campaign (e.g. signs a petition) but does not express interest in 'getting involved.'
- 2. Volunteer Prospect:** Supporter signs up on a website or says yes to a volunteer's ask. Organizer invites them to come out to a volunteer event, and ideally, this invitation happens **within 48 hours**, because prospects are more likely to say yes the quicker the follow up timeframe.
- 3. Team member:** Supporter comes out to a team event (e.g. a meeting or an event), and is now a team member. Organizer schedules the team member to come to another event or schedules a **recruitment 1:1 meeting**.
- 4. Leadership Prospect:** Team member begins taking on leadership. Organizer then schedules an **escalation 1:1** meeting to ask team member to take on a leadership role.
- 5. Organizer:** Leadership prospect is able to organize. They have provided confirmation, so organizer asks them to be a leader.

“Providing confirmation” means exhibiting ability and commitment to the team. If a team member shows that they can follow through on commitments, the more confidence you can have in their leadership and so give them more responsibility. Note: Steps 4 and 5 can be repeated over and over to escalate the organizer into new roles as they take on more responsibility and become more committed.

Exercises

Structuring Teams

- | | |
|--|---------|
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| 2. Worksheet: Developing shared purpose | Page 53 |
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| 4. Worksheet: Developing team roles | Page 56 |



Teamwork: Structuring Teams

Building your team

Goals

- Develop your team purpose
- Identify the norms you will practice as a team
- Define your leadership roles and discuss the roles relative to the talents of those in your team
- Decide on a decision-making process

Agenda

TOTAL TIME: 70 min.

1	Gather and review agenda. Choose a timekeeper for this session	2 min.
2	Review your shared values, interests and resources chart from the previous session	3 min.
3	Develop your shared purpose using the worksheet below. Review your shared interests from the last session, and focus on how you as a team will work together on your campaign	35 min.
4	Decide on collaborative norms that will enable you to function with shared commitment. Use the worksheet below	10 min.
5	Determine team roles . Brainstorm possible responsibilities as you work together. For example, who will coordinate the meetings? Talk about how these roles might match up with the talents of those on your team. See an example of team roles below	15 min.
6	Create a team name	5 min.



Worksheet: Structuring Teams

Developing shared purpose

There are four parts to this exercise.

In the first part, as individuals, you will take **5 minutes to clarify your own thinking** about what the purpose of your team could be as you work on a campaign together.

In the second part, as a team, you will take **10 minutes to share your ideas, look for the common focus, and discern a purpose you can all support.**

In the third part, you have **5 more minutes to write a sentence** that you think captures the sense of your team.

Finally, in step four, as a team, you will have **5 more minutes to consider the second round of sentences and decide on one** that best articulates your team’s perspective.

Part I: Individual Work (5 minutes)

- In the first column, based on the work you did on common interests and values in the relationship session, write down the **unique goal or goals of your team.**
- In the second column, write down **whom your team serves:** what are the people like and what are their interests?
- In the third column, write down the kinds of activities that your team could engage in to fulfil its purpose by serving this community. What is the **unique work that your team could do?**

Our team’s shared purpose is to	The constituency we serve is	We will achieve our shared purpose by
(Briefly describe your team’s unique reason for coming together)	(Briefly describe your constituency’s characteristics)	(List the specific activities that your team would undertake)

After brainstorming answers to all three questions, take a few moments to write a sentence that you think best describes your team’s purpose, its constituency, and its activities. Draw on all three columns above.

Examples of a shared purpose sentence:

We share the purpose of bodily autonomy by organizing entry level university students in Kigali to create their own safe and brave spaces by providing them with tools, coaching, training, and mentoring.

Our team’s shared purpose is to

Part 2: Teamwork (10 minutes)

As each person reads his or her sentence, the facilitator notes the key words on the wall poster under purpose, constituency, or work. Note specific words to which you respond, that spark your curiosity, or that give you energy. When you are done, your facilitator circles the words that seem to resonate most strongly with your team.

Part 3: Individual Work (5 minutes)

In light of what you learned from the last session, write a new sentence that you think can articulate a shared purpose, using some of the key words and themes.

Our team’s shared purpose is to

Part 4: Teamwork (10 minutes)

Read your sentences again and choose – or combine – one that can best articulate the shared sense of your team.



Worksheet: Structuring Teams

Developing team norms

Team norms/expectations (10 minutes)

Review the sample team norms below. Add, subtract, or modify to create norms for your team. Be sure to include group norms on each theme below and how you will self-correct if the norm is broken. If you don't self-correct, the new norm will be breaking the norms.

Decision-making: what is the process by which we will make decisions?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Majority rules: Whatever gets the most votes wins Consensus: Everyone must agree Delegation: Nominate one or two people on your team to be the ultimate decision-makers Coin flip: Leave the decision to fate! Other 	
Discussion and decision-making: how will we discuss options and reach decisions as a team to ensure vigorous input and debate?	
Always Do Engage in open, honest debate Ask open-ended questions Balance advocacy with inquiry	Never Do Engage in personal attacks Fail to listen to what others say Jump to conclusions
Meeting management: How will we manage meetings to respect each other's time?	
Always Do Start on time; stay on time Be fully present throughout the meeting	Never Do Come to meetings unprepared Answer cell phones or do email
Accountability: How will we delegate responsibilities for actions and activities? How will we follow through on commitments?	
Always Do Clarify understanding Provide follow-up on action items Ask for/offer support when there is a need Weekly check-in	Never Do Assume you have agreement Assume tasks are getting done Commit to a task that you know you won't do
How will you "self-correct" if norms are not followed?	

**Teams work best when you have a regular, reliable time to coordinate together. What will your team's regular meeting time and place be?



Worksheet: Structuring Teams

Developing team roles (15 minutes)

Review the Team Coordinator role below as an example of what roles might look like in your individual campaigns. Thinking about how you should organize the next event/meeting, discuss how your roles would fit together to create an interdependent leadership team that supports one another in your individual projects. What would each role have to be good at?

Based on the discussion about the roles, **go around the circle** and ask each person to tell others:

1. **What experience and talents they have** that might contribute to the leadership team
2. **What specifically they want to learn in more detail (30 seconds each)**. How might these talents match up to particular roles? Are there any clear “fits”?

Note: These team roles should not be seen as permanent. For the team to be strong, all leaders should have to earn leadership by carrying out responsibilities relevant to the role they seek.

Role	Responsibilities	You would be good for this role if you ...	Interested team members and related skills/ talents
Team Coordinator	Coordinate the work of the leadership team. Prepare for meetings, give support and coaching to the team.		

Team name (5 minutes)



Developing Strategy

SheDecides.

Developing Strategy

Strategizing is turning what you have (resources) into what you need (power) to get what you want (change).

Organizing campaigns are based on broad values. But effective organizing campaigns need a clear strategic objective. This is a way to turn your team's values into action, e.g., desegregate buses in Montgomery, Alabama or getting to 100% clean electricity. Trans-local campaigns locate responsibility for strategy at the top (or at the center) but are able to "chunk out" strategic objectives in time (deadlines) and space (local areas) as a campaign. This allows significant local responsibility for figuring out how to achieve those objectives. Responsibility for strategizing local objectives empowers, motivates and invests local teams

Strategizing is motivated

Intentional hopeful action when encountering challenge/opportunity

Strategizing is intentional

How to turn what we have (resources) into what we need (power) to get what we want (outcomes)

Strategizing is situated

Unfolds within a context, the particularities of which really matter.

Strategizing is a verb

Strategizing requires learning from experience real time to adapt one's actions.

Strategizing is nested

Strategizing links resources to outcomes through action (tactics)

Summary: What motivates strategy is the will to solve a problem. We create strategy as an answer to a problem that we need to solve immediately, or to take advantage of a unique possibility. Strategy is how we turn an inspirational vision into a specific goal.

Strategy:

is creative

is a process of
reiteration

requires
common effort

has a clear
goal

is a verb!

When you structured your leadership team, you decided on a shared purpose. This is your overall mission, your constituency, and the kind of activities you'll undertake. The challenge now is to strategize just HOW you will carry out that purpose.

The **first step** is to identify the people you are organizing, your constituency, and map out the other relevant actors.

The **second step** is to come up with the goal of your organizing effort. You do this by asking: what exactly is the problem is you hope to solve, how would the world look different if it were solved, why hasn't that problem been solved, what would it take to solve it, and towards what clear, observable, and motivational goal could members of your constituency focus their work to get started, build their capacity, and develop their leadership?

The **third step** is to figure out how your constituency could turn the resources it has into the power it needs to achieve that goal. This requires deciding what tactics it could use, how it could target its efforts, and how it would time its campaign.

Strategy is “turning resources you have into the power you need to get what you want – your goal.”

- **Strategic Goal (what you want):** The goal is a clear, measurable point that allows you to know if you've won or lost, and that meets the challenge your constituency faces
- **Power (what you need):** Tactics through which you can turn your resources into the capacity you need to achieve your goal
- **Resources (what your constituency has):** Time, money, skills, relationships, etc.

How Strategy Works

Strategy is Motivated: What's the problem?

We are natural strategists. We conceive purposes, encounter obstacles in achieving those purposes, and we figure out how to overcome those obstacles. But because we are also creatures of habit, we only strategize when we have to. That's when we have a problem, something goes wrong, or something forces a change in our plans. When this happens, we pay attention, take a look around, and decide we have to do something differently. Just as our emotional understanding inhabits the stories we tell, our cognitive understanding inhabits the strategy we devise.

Strategy is Creative: What can we do about the problem?

Strategy requires developing an understanding of why the problem hasn't been solved, as well as a theory of how to solve it. This is called a theory of change. Moreover, because those who

resist change often have access to more resources, those who seek change often have to be more resourceful. We have to use this resourcefulness to create the capacity – the power – to get the problem solved. It's not so much about getting "more" resources as it is about using one's resources smartly and creatively.

Strategy is a Verb: How can we adapt as we learn to solve the problem?

The real action in strategy is, as Alinsky put it, in the reaction – by other actors, the opposition, and the challenges and opportunities that emerge along the way. What makes it "strategy" and not "reaction" is the mindfulness we can bring to bear on our choices relative to what we want to achieve. Think of this like a potter interacting with the clay on the wheel, as Mintzberg describes it.

Although our goal may remain constant, strategizing requires ongoing adaptation of current action to meet new information. Something worked better than we expected. Something did not work how we had expected. Things change. Some people oppose us so we have to respond. Launching a campaign only begins the work of strategizing. This is one reason your leadership team should include a full diversity of the skills, access to information, and interests needed to achieve your goal. We call this "strategic capacity." Remember, strategy is not a single event, but an ongoing process continuing throughout the life of a project. We plan, we act, we evaluate the results of our action, we plan some more, we act further, evaluate further, etc. We strategize, as we implement, not prior to it.

Strategy is Situated: How can I connect the view in the valley with the view from the mountains?

Strategy unfolds within a specific context – the particularities of which really matter. One of the most challenging aspects of strategizing is that it requires both a mastery of the details of the "arena" in which it is enacted, as well as the ability to go up to the top of the mountain and get a view of the whole. The power of imaginative strategizing can only be realized when rooted within an understanding of the trees AND the forest. One way to create the "arena of action" is by mapping the "actors" are that populate that arena.

Key Strategic Questions

1. Who are my **PEOPLE**?
2. What is the **CHANGE** they need?
3. How can they turn their **RESOURCES** into the **POWER** they need?
4. What is their **STRATEGIC GOAL**?
5. Which **TACTICS** can they use?

Step 1: Who are my people?

Constituency

Constituents are people who have a need to organize, who can contribute leadership, who can commit resources, and who can become a new source of power. It makes a big difference whether we think of the people we work with as constituents, clients, or customers. Constituents (from the Latin for “stand together”) associate on behalf of common interests, commit resources to acting on those interests, and have a voice in deciding how to act. Clients (from the Latin for “one who leans on another”) have an interest in services others provide, do not contribute resources to a common effort, nor do they have a voice in decisions. Customers (a term derived from trade) have an interest in goods or services that a seller can provide in exchange for resources in which he or she has an interest. The organizer’s job is to turn a community – people who share common values or interests – into a constituency – people who can act on behalf of those values or interests.

Leadership

Although your constituency is the focus of your work, your goal as an organizer is to draw upon leadership from within that constituency – the people who you work with to organize everyone else. Their work, like your own, is to “accept responsibility for enabling others to achieve purpose in the face of uncertainty”. They facilitate the work members of their constituency must do in order to achieve their shared goals, represent their constituency to others, and are accountable to their constituency. Your work with these leaders is to support them to learn the five organizing practices you are learning: relationship building, storytelling, structuring, strategizing, and action. By developing their leadership you, as an organizer, not only can get to “get to scale.” You are also creating new capacity for action – power – within your constituency. For the purpose of this exercise your group here is your leadership team.

Opposition

In pursuing their interests, constituents may find themselves in conflict with the interests of other individuals or organizations. An employers’ interest in maximizing profit, for example, may conflict with an employees’ interest in earning a comfortable wage. A tobacco company’s interests may conflict not only with those of anti-smoking groups, but of the public in general. A street gang’s interests may conflict with those of a church youth group. The interests of a Republican Congressional candidate conflict with those of the Democratic candidate in the same district. At times, however, opposition may not be immediately obvious, emerging clearly only in the course of a campaign.

Supporters

People whose interests are not directly or obviously affected may find it to in their interest to back

an organization's work financially, politically, voluntarily, etc. Although they may not be part of the constituency, they may sit on governing boards which can provide resources. For example, Church organizations and foundations provided a great deal of support for the civil rights movement.

Competitors and collaborators

These are individuals or organizations that we may share some interests with, but not others. They may target the same constituency, the same sources of support, or face the same opposition. Two unions trying to organize the same workforce may compete or collaborate. Two community groups trying to serve the same constituency may compete or collaborate in their fundraising.

Other actors

These are individuals and actors who may have a great deal of relevance to the problem at hand, but could contribute to solving it, or making it harder to solve, in many different ways. This includes the media, the courts, or the general public, for example. Mapping the actors can help us identify those who may be responsible for the problem our constituency faces, where they can find allies, and who else has an interest in the situation.

Step 2: What is the change they need?

To decide on the change we want to see, we first need to ask what exactly the problem is, how the world might look if it were solved, why it hasn't been solved, and what it would take to solve it.

What's the problem?

What exactly is the problem you want to solve, in real terms, in terms of people's every day life? Brainstorm your teams understanding of what the problem is with as much specificity as possible. Dig into it and go beyond the accepted answers.

How would the world look different if the problem were solved?

What happens if we fail to act? What is the "nightmare" that awaits – or may already be here? On the other hand, what could the world look like if we do act? What's our realistic "dream" – a possibility that could become reality?

Why hasn't the problem been solved?

If the world would look so much better for our people if the problem were solved, why hasn't it been solved? Has no one thought of it? Did people try, but found they were meeting too much resistance? Did people not know how? Did they lack information? Did they lack technology? Would solving the problem threaten interests powerful enough to derail the attempts?

What would it take to solve the problem?

More information? Greater awareness? New tools? Better organization? Better communication? More power? What changes by what people would be required for the problem to be solved?

What is the change they need?

What change could you focus on achieving that would make a real difference in the lives of your constituency. It is more focused than a shared purpose but broader than a strategic goal.

Step 3: How can they turn their resources into the power they need – a Theory of Change?

Figuring out how to achieve a strategic goal – or even what goal is worth trying to achieve – requires developing a “theory of change.”

We all make assumptions about how change happens. Some people think that sharing information widely enough (or “raise awareness”) about a problem will change things. Others contend that if we just get all the “stakeholders” into the same room and talk with each other, we’ll discover that we have more in common than what separates us and believe this will solve the problem. Still others think we just need to be smarter about figuring out the solution.

Community organizers focus on the community and their constituency because they believe that unless the community itself develops its own capacity to solve the problem, it won’t remain solved. Another word for “capacity” is “power” or, as Dr. King defined it “the ability to achieve purpose.” Power grows out of the influence that we can have on each other. If your interest in someone else’s resources is greater than their interest in your resources, that person gets some power over you and use your resources for their purposes. On the other hand, if you have an equal interest in each other’s resources, you can collaborate to create more power with each other. You can then bring more capacity to bear on achieving shared purposes than you can alone.

The question is: how do you proactively organize your resources to shift the power enough to win the change you want, building our capacity to win more over time?

Since power is a kind of relationship, tracking it down requires asking four questions:

- **What do WE want?**
- **Who has the RESOURCES to create that change?**
- **What do THEY want?**
- **What resources do WE have that THEY want or need?**

If it turns out that we have the resources we need, but just need to use them more collaboratively, then it's a "power with" dynamic. If it turns out the resources we need have to come from somewhere else, then it's a "power over" dynamic. Think about how your constituency can use its resources in ways that will create the capacity it needs to achieve the goal: IF we do this, THEN that will likely happen. Test this out with a series of "If-Then" sentences. Once you're satisfied you are ready to articulate your organizing sentence:

"We are organizing **WHO** to achieve **WHAT (goal)** by **HOW (theory of change)** to achieve what **CHANGE.**"

Power

Power with: Sometimes we can create the change we need by just organizing our resources with others, creating *power with* them.

Power over: Sometimes others hold the *power over* decisions or resources that we need in order to create the change we need. In these cases we have to organize our own power to make a claim on the resources or decisions that will fulfil our interest.

Changing power over

When we have to engage with those who have power over us in order to create change, we need to ask ourselves a few questions:

1. What do we want?
2. Who has the resources to create that change?
3. What do they want?
4. What resources do we have that they want or need?

Step 4: What is their strategic goal?

How might we set a goal that – while it may not solve the whole problem identified in Step Two – could get us well on our way by making a real change, building our capacity, motivating others, and creating a foundation for what comes next?

No single campaign can solve everything. But unless we can focus our efforts on a clear outcome, we risk wasting precious resources in ways that won't move us towards our ultimate goal.

Here are some criteria to consider for a motivational, strategic organizing campaign goal that builds leadership and power:

1. Specific Focus: It's concrete, measurable, and meaningful. If your constituents win, achieving this goal will result in visible, significant change in their daily lives. This is the difference between "our goal is to win reproductive justice" and "our goal is to ensure that every student has access to free, round the clock contraception on our campus." We make progress on the first one by turning it into something that can be achieved by moving specific decision makers to reallocate resources in specific ways. Your constituency will need this focus to move into action.

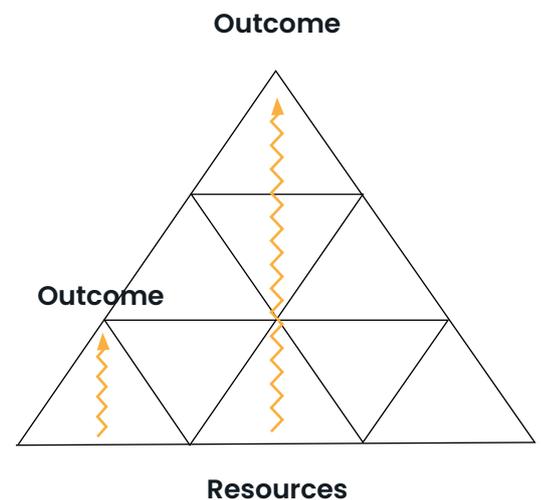
2. Motivational: It has the makings of a good story. The goal is rooted in values important to your constituency, requires taking on a real challenge, and stretches your resources. It isn't something you can win tomorrow. Think David and Goliath.

3. Leverage: It makes the most of your constituency's strengths, experience and resources, but is outside the strengths, experience and resources of your opponent.

4. Builds Capacity: It requires developing leaders who can organize their own constituency to enhance the power of your organization. It offers multiple local targets or points of entry and organization.

5. Contagious: It could be emulated by others pursuing similar goals.

This pyramid chart offers a way to think about where the goal of your campaign can be nested within a larger mission. At every level, strategy requires imagining an outcome, assessing resources available to achieve that outcome, and, in light of the context, devising a theory of change. That theory asks you to think about how to turn your resources into the power needed to achieve your desired outcome. Its theory is enacted through tactics, timing, and targeting. In the bus boycott, planning the initial meeting required strategizing as much as figuring out how to sustain the campaign for the long haul. It is likely different people are responsible for different strategic scope at different levels of an organization or for different time periods, but good strategy is required at every level.



After agreeing upon criteria that make for a good strategic goal in your context, brainstorm again, generating as many possible goals as you can. Then evaluate them each against the criteria you've established.

Step 5: What tactics can they use?

Do you remember what a “tactic” is? It’s the activity that makes your strategy real. Strategy without tactics is just a bunch of ideas. Tactics without strategy wastes resources. The art of organizing is in the dynamic relationship between strategy and tactics. You need to use your strategy to inform the tactics, and learn from the tactics to adapt strategy.

Your campaign will get into trouble if you use a tactic just because you happen to be familiar with it but haven’t identified how that tactic can actually help you achieve your goal. Similarly, if you spend all your time strategizing, without investing the time, effort, and skill to learn how to use the tactics you need skilfully, you waste your time.

Strategy is a way of hypothesizing: if I do this (tactic), then this (goal) may happen. Like any hypothesis, the proof is in the testing of it.

Criteria for good tactics include:

- **Strategic:** It makes good use of your constituency’s resources to build concrete, measurable progress toward campaign goals.
- **Strengthens your organization:** It improves the capacity of your people to work together.
- **Supports leadership development:** It develops new skills, new understanding, and, most importantly, new leadership.

There are two ways to operate in the world. You can be reactive, as many organizations are, or you can be proactive. To be proactive you have to set your own campaign goals and timeline, organizing your tactics so that they build capacity and momentum over time.

Step 6: What is their timeline?

The timing of a campaign is structured as an unfolding narrative or story. It begins with a foundation period (prologue), starts crisply with a kick-off (curtain goes up), builds slowly to successive peaks (act one, act two), culminates in a final peak determining the outcome (denouement), and is resolved as we celebrate the outcome (epilogue). Our efforts generate momentum not mysteriously, but as a snowball. As we accomplish each objective we generate new resources that can be applied to achieve the subsequent greater objective. Our motivation grows as each

small success persuades us that the subsequent success is achievable. With each success, our commitment grows.

A campaign timeline has clear phases, with a peak at the end of each phase. This is a threshold moment when we have succeeded in creating a new capacity that can be put to work to achieve the next peak.

For example, one phase might be a two-month fundraising and house meeting campaign that ends in a campaign kickoff meeting or rally. Another phase might be two months of door-to-door contact with constituents affected by the problem you're trying to solve, collecting a target number of petitions to deliver with a march on the Mayor at City Hall at the end. That march would be another peak.

Within each phase there is a predictable cycle. These are mini-campaigns in themselves: training, launch, action, more action, peak, evaluation.

When organizing a peak, keep in mind a specific outcome that you want the peak to generate. For example, if you want to sign-up 50 new volunteers at an event or launch three neighborhood teams, how do you make that happen?

After each peak, your staff, volunteers and members need time to rest, learn, re-train and plan for the next phase. Often organizations say, "we don't have time for that!" Campaigns that don't take time to reflect, adjust and re-train end up burning through their human resources and becoming more and more reactionary over time.



Exercises

Developing Strategy

- | | |
|---|---------|
| 1. Worksheet: Organizing Statement | Page 70 |
| 2. Worksheet: Tactics and Timeline | Page 76 |



Worksheet: Developing Strategy

Organizing Statement

You may find it useful to create an organizing statement. This is a simple tool to clarify who your constituency is, what their common purpose is, how you see change together, what strategic goal you hope to achieve to bring you closer to the change you want to see, and by when you want to achieve that goal.

1. We are organizing (**WHO**: Our people)
2. To pursue (**WHY**: Purpose, overall change they want to see)
3. By (**HOW**: Theory of change)
4. To achieve (**WHAT**: Strategic goal)
5. By (**WHEN**: Timeline, date.)
6. Using the following **TACTICS** (makes strategy real).

Here is an example from **SheDecides Organizers**

- We are organizing **50 religious leaders aged 25–45 in Sao Paulo** (**WHO**)
- To pursue **access to sexual and reproductive rights** (**WHY**)
- By **creating safe and brave spaces of conversation and of action planning for their congregations about the relationship between religion and sexual rights** (**HOW**)
- To achieve **understanding by an initial group in their congregation that they can be people of faith, and access full body autonomy** (**WHAT**)
- By **31 Oct 2021** (**WHEN**)
- Using the following **TACTICS**:
 - Participating in Saturday afternoon youth activities to identify youth leaders
 - Organizing film circles as small safe spaces using art to open conversations
 - Organizing one monthly activity that connects youth community outreach with sexual rights activism and engaging at least 10 parents per congregation in these activities
 - Creating a peer-group for parents who are concerned about sexuality and their adolescent children
 - Connecting the 50 faith leaders of the congregations and supporting them in organizing themselves as a team
 - Connecting the 50 faith leaders with pro-choice lawyers and doctors who are organized

Getting focused: who are your people? What is the change they need (35 min.)

Step 1: With your team, fill in the table below:

PEOPLE (5 min) Who are my people? (constituency)	
CHANGE (30 min)	
What is their problem? (5)	How would the world look different if their problem were solved? (5)
Why hasn't their problem been solved? (10)	What would it take to solve their problem? (10)
What is the change they need? How might you articulate your top of the pyramid outcome (you may draw on your team purpose statement from earlier)?	

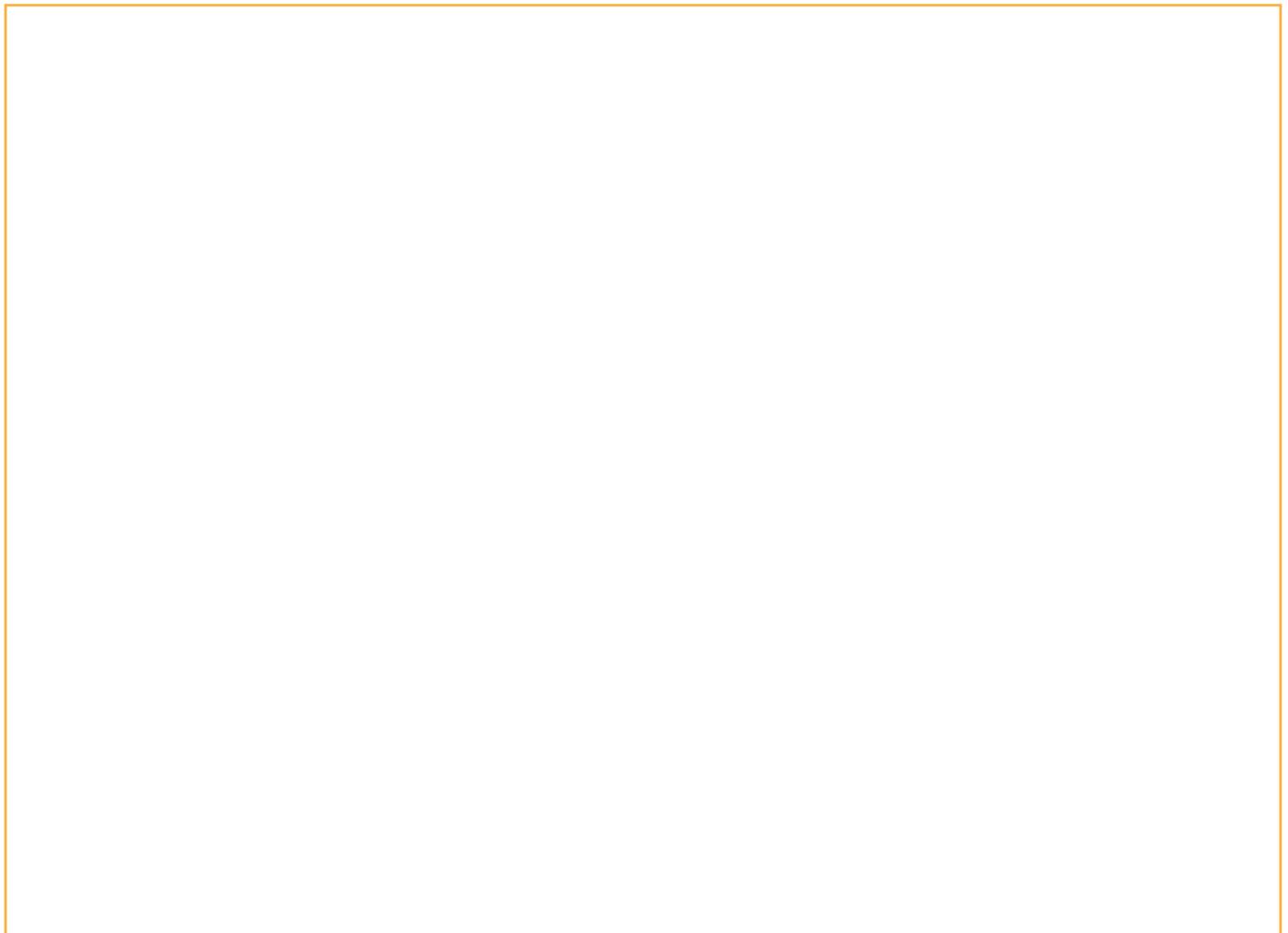
Who are the actors? (15 min.)

Step 1: Create the map (15 min)

Draw a map-of-actors chart like the one you see below on flipchart paper. Write the names of all of the actors on sticky notes, indicating their resources and their interests. Place them on the map of actors where you think they are most likely to be.

Start with yourselves. Use what you learned from building relationships to fill this out. **Brainstorm other relevant actors** at local, state, and national levels by name or specific position wherever possible. Put these names on post-its and add them to the map. Be sure to include the following:

1. Who might be members of your constituency?
2. Who might be your opposition?
3. Who might be your allies (support)?
4. Who might be competitors?
5. Who might play other key roles, depending on how they are mobilized (courts, press, voters, etc.).



Where's the power? Developing your theory of change (15 min.)

Your theory of change is your hypothesis about how to organize your constituents' resources to affect those who hold the resources/power to solve the problem. *What would it take to get these different actors to take actions that further your strategic goal? At what point will they actually feel your constituents' power?*

Think back to your change and what it will take to achieve it: Who holds the resources and decision-making power needed to achieve it? Fill in the corresponding table below:

<p style="text-align: center;">POWER WITH</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">POWER OVER</p> <p>If your people need access to the resources held by others to achieve the goal, complete the following:</p> 
<p>What resources do our people hold that they can use to achieve their goal? (make a creative and specific list)</p>	<p>What do WE want (change)?</p>
	<p>Who DECIDES if we get it?</p>
<p>Why haven't our people used these resources to achieve their goal?</p>	<p>What do THEY care most about?</p>
<p>How can our people combine their resources in new ways that can achieve their goal?</p>	<p>What do WE have that THEY want or need? (often the resources of your constituency need to be withheld, distributed, or organized in new ways)</p>
<p>Write your theory of change:</p> <p><i>If my people use their resources to do...</i></p> <p><i>Then the result will be...</i></p> <p><i>Because...</i></p>	

Decide on your strategic goal (10 min.)

Review criteria for a good strategic goal (2 min)

Focuses effort

Motivates participation

Leverages resources

Builds capacity

Can be emulated

Decide on a strategic goal (8 min)

What concrete outcome will you aim to achieve that will help your constituents get what they want?

Openly brainstorm and build upon each idea, then use your criteria above to evaluate them, and make a decision.

What is the goal of your campaign?

Goals

- To decide on the tactics that can help you achieve your strategic goal
- To put those tactics on a campaign timeline culminating in a peak

Agenda

TOTAL TIME: 50 min.

As a team, you will brainstorm tactics that will help you achieve your strategic goal, sequence your tactics into peaks on a campaign timeline, and visualize your kickoff tactic.

1	Gather in your team. Nominate a timekeeper and scribe. Review agenda and clarify concepts.	2 min.
2	Review your theory of change and strategic goal . Incorporate any feedback from Strategy I.	5 min.
3	What tactics can help you achieve the goal? On what timeline ? Use the following worksheet to help you strategize.	25 min.
4	Brainstorm and visualize your kickoff tactics using the worksheet.	15 min.
5	Choose someone from your group to present your campaign timeline and the visualization of your strategic goal and kickoff tactic back to the whole group for final internalization.	3 min.



Worksheet: Developing Strategy

Tactics and Timeline

1. Tactics & campaign timeline (Total: 25 min.)

Step 1: Brainstorm Tactics (10 min)

As a team, brainstorm as many tactics as you can in 10 minutes on flipchart paper. Your tactics should be based on your **theory of change**. How will you organize your constituency's resources to create the change they want? Good tactics are based in the culture and experience of your people and reflect your values.

Once you have a list, decide on the top three, using the following criteria: do they make good use of your resources? Do they build capacity? Do they help you to achieve your goal?

Step 2: Sequence Tactics into Peaks (15 min)

Start by strategizing backwards. How will you organize your tactics over time to achieve your strategic goal?

For each tactic, determine a peak goal. Ask yourselves: what would it look like to achieve it? A peak is typically an event or action with your constituency that shows all the capacity that's been generated since the last peak. **Starting at your strategic goal**, work backwards to sequence your peaks on a campaign timeline (see example below).

Ensure each peak builds on what came before so you are gaining power and capacity over time, culminating in your strategic goal. What outcome do you want from each peak (for example, how many new people sign up or how many people participate in a march)?



2. Kick-off tactic (Total: 15 min.)

Step 1: Brainstorm Kickoff Tactics (5 min)

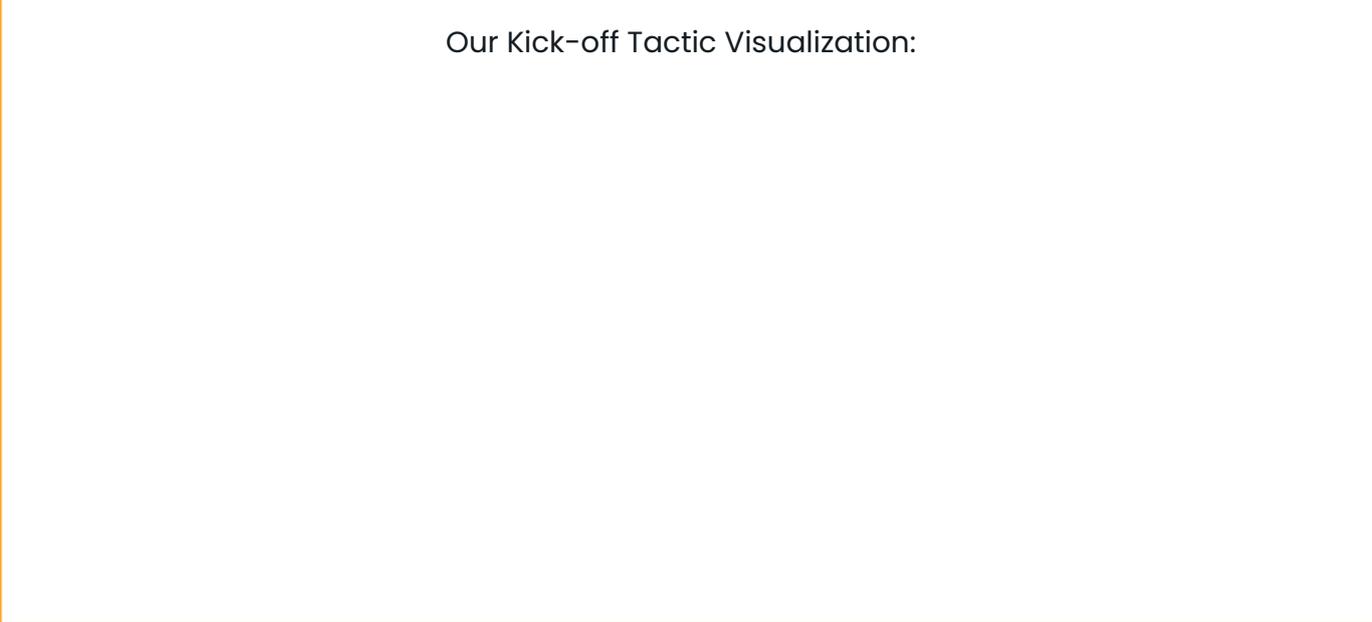
This time, you'll need to strategize forward. Focus on your first peak: your campaign kickoff. What measurable outcome will you try to achieve with this first kickoff? How will the kickoff be motivational for your constituency? How will it reveal to your community its own resources, courage and solidarity?

Brainstorm as many tactics for your kickoff as you can in 10 minutes on a flipchart paper. Try to use "Yes, And!" strategizing, rather than "No, But!" Build on each other's ideas. Then use your decision-making process (from yesterday's team name exercise) to decide which tactic you will organize as a team.

Step 2: Visualize (10 min)

A. As a team, draw a picture of your kick-off tactic. What will it look like? When will it take place? Where? Who will be involved? How many? What will they be doing? What will they be wearing? What will you be doing? When?

Our Kick-off Tactic Visualization:



B. Make a list of the things that need to get done between now and then in order to effectively organize your kick-off tactic:

-
-
-
-
-
-



Taking Action

SheDecides.

Taking Action

Organizing outcomes must be clear, measurable, and specific if progress is to be evaluated, accountability practiced, and strategy adapted based on experience. Measures may include volunteers recruited, money raised, people at a meeting, voters contacted, pledge cards signed, laws passed, etc. Although electoral campaigns enjoy the advantage of very clear outcome measures, any effective organizing drive must come up with the equivalent. Regular reporting of progress towards your goal creates opportunity for feedback, learning, and adaptation. Training must be provided for all skills (e.g., holding house meetings, phone banking, etc.) to carry out the program. Social media may help enable reporting, feedback, coordination. Transparency must exist as to how individuals, groups, and the campaign as a whole are doing with regard to their progress toward their goal.

What is action?

Action consists of mobilizing and deploying constituency resources in ways that can create the power needed to win.

First, effective action produces results that contribute to accomplishing your goals.

Second, effective action strengthens your organization and attracts and engages new people. It increases our community's capacity to effect change in the future.

Third, effective action contributes to the growth of individuals involved in the campaign; it develops leadership.

How can we engage in effective action?

Effective action requires commitment and motivation.

How do we get clear commitments?

First, we must mobilize others to make explicit commitments to achieve specific, measurable outcomes.



When we commit others to action, we are giving them an opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to a cause they care about. But there are various reasons why we don't just go ahead and ask. Sometimes, we worry about burdening others, or we worry they will say no and we'll feel rejected, or maybe they'll say yes and then we'll have to commit ourselves.

When we ask others to join us, it is critical that we use clear, concise language. Sometimes we may try to minimize the commitment, making it seem smaller or less important than it really is. But respecting others means being very transparent about the work ahead, about the support they'll receive, and giving them a choice of whether or not to commit.

Mobilizing effective commitments requires four steps:

1. Connect: Make the "ask" as specific as you can to the person you are trying to mobilize. Identify yourself, why you're doing what you're doing, and let them know why you're asking them to help. This can be done with few words.

2. Context: Explain why the action you are asking them to take is urgent. Be specific about the challenge and the hope.

3. Commitment: Explicitly ask the other person if you can count on them to engage in action with you. Be very specific about the date, time, and place.

"Can we count on you to join us in _____?"

"Will you join me in doing _____?"

LISTEN CAREFULLY!

Is the answer:

"Yes! Definitely!" (Great! Confirm the details)

"Maybe . . ." (Ask what questions they have and how you can follow up)

"No, I'm sorry." (Ask why? Give them your contact info in case they change their mind)

4. Catapult: if someone says "yes", then give them the respect of having real work and real responsibility at your action and a real plan to get there. Ask:

Can you bring something to the event (i.e. food, posters, etc.)?

Can you commit to bringing two friends with you?

How do you plan on getting to the event? (people with plans are much more likely to attend!)

How do we confirm and follow up on commitments?

In our [Introduction to Organizing](#), we gave the following definition of leadership:

“Taking responsibility for enabling others to achieve purpose in the face of uncertainty.”

Taking responsibility means we can't just get a commitment to action, pocket it like change, and walk away. We have the responsibility to follow up and do everything it takes to support others in joining us. Most important are “reminder calls” and the closer to the event, the more important and effective the reminder call will be.

1. **Recruit** others and get a specific commitment to action.
2. **Confirm** the commitment a few days out. Check in and see if the people who committed need a ride, can invite others, or can take responsibility for part of the action. **Confirm** the day before the action. Provide full details on the place, time, and purpose of the action, including any updates on the agenda or attendees. Confirm one more time 30-60 minutes before the action. This is the period when we're all most likely to find something more urgent to do. Convey how excited you are to have others join you in action.
3. **ACTION!** Lead a motivational action that respects others' time, but also provides full training, opportunities for relationship building, and purposeful, measurable action.
4. **Evaluate & celebrate** the action together. Tally up all measurable outcomes so that everyone can see that they're part of a bigger whole. Debrief in detail what worked and what should change next time. Then celebrate! Who wants to spend their free time without having fun?! Generate routines for how people in your organization can celebrate together, perhaps with food, music or a round of stories from the day.
5. **Thank everyone** the next day for their participation in action. Tell them specifically what impact the action had in the campaign. Ask for their input on what worked and what should be changed next time.
6. **Move participants to the next level of leadership** where they can help you and your team plan more actions in their city or neighborhood.



How do we design motivational action?

For action to engage others in ways that expands – rather than depletes – our resources, we need to design action mindfully. If people feel that what they are doing is insignificant, or that they are being used, or that they must do boring and meaningless work, then they are unlikely to take initiative, solve problems or recommit.

Task Characteristics		Outcomes
Task Significance (TS)	("The task really matters")	Motivation Problem Solving
Task Identity (TI)	("My contribution is clear")	Commitment
Skill Variety (SV)	("Takes my head and hands")	
Choice (C)	("Choosing how I do the work")	
Feedback (FB)	("Seeing how I'm doing as I do it")	

How does motivational task design work?

Outcomes: When a task is well designed, people who participate will feel more motivated, take initiative in solving problems, and make a deeper commitment to the work.

Design: Creating the experience to achieve these outcomes requires attention to these five elements of design

Task Significance (TS): Experiencing the impact of the work on the world

Task Identity (TI): Recognition of your "ownership" of a clear piece of the work

Skill Variety (SV): Engagement of a variety of skills including heart, hands, and brain

Choice (C): Having the space to make competent choices about how to do the work

Feedback (FB): Results are visible to the person performing the task, even as they perform.

Designing Motivational Tasks

Using the checklist below, we can evaluate tasks to determine how motivational they are, redesign them to make them more motivational, and construct them to create a leadership ladder, opportunity for people to earn greater responsibilities.

Designing Motivational Tasks

Using the checklist below, we can evaluate tasks to determine how motivational they are, redesign them to make them more motivational, and construct them to create a leadership ladder, opportunity for people to earn greater responsibilities.

Task Design Ladder

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Task Significance (TS)			
Task Identity (TI)			
Skill Variety (SV)			
Choice (C)			
Feedback (FB)			

Getting into action now

The action we'll engage in at this training is to make a clear ask of your peers to support you in a specific, measurable action, and making phone calls to ask others to join you for your kick-off tactic!

Exercises

Taking Action

1. **Teamwork:** Taking Action Page 84
2. **Worksheet:** Developing the skill of engaging real commitment Page 85



Team Work: Taking Action

Goals

- Practice the core organizing skill of recruiting others to make a real commitment to translate their values into action.

Agenda

TOTAL TIME: 50 min.

1	Gather with your team. Choose a timekeeper. Review the agenda.	2 min.
2	As a team, decide on your goal for this exercise : How many total commitments will you need to get for your kickoff? How many “asks” will you have to make? Write it on the worksheet below.	3 min.
3	As individuals, take time to note the key questions you will ask to get a conversation going, the key stories you will share to bring yourself to the table, and the specific “ask” you will make. This is not a “script” that you will read, but rather a guide for a meaningful conversation. Use the worksheet that follows. <i>Role-play an ask with your team.</i>	7 min.
4	Start recruiting! Listen for instructions from the role-play facilitator. For the first round, half the room will be the organizers, and the other half will be the constituents. The organizers have 10 minutes to have meaningful commitment conversations and get commitments for their kickoff event. Each individual should use the worksheet that follows to track how many “asks” you’ve made, and how many commitments you’ve obtained.	15 min.
5	Switch and start recruiting! Now the other half of the room will have a chance to be organizers and recruit commitments for their kickoff event. Each individual should use the worksheet that follows to track how many “asks” you’ve made, and how many commitments you’ve obtained.	10 min.
6	Debrief with your team. Organizers, return to your team to report back and tally up your whole team’s totals.	5 min.



Worksheet: Taking Action

Developing the skill of engaging real commitment

Step 1: Decide on your team’s goals for this exercise and record it in the table below (3 min.)

Team name	Team goal: How many total commitments do we need?	How many people will we make “asks” to in order to reach our goal?

Step 2: Prepare for Your Meaningful Commitment Conversation (7 min.)

Using the story work you’ve done to help you, write your recruitment call script. Make sure you ask questions to understand the motivations of the person you’re engaging with, and that your story includes something about you and why you’re motivated to act. Remember to tell them a little bit about who your group is and why they’ve come together now to work on your action. Present the choice that your listener has to make: to join us at our upcoming action.

Don’t worry about getting it exactly right. Your conversations will each be different anyway. They should be conversational and you should be actively responding to your listener, not speaking in an overly-scripted or formal manner.

Here is a good list of sample talking points that you can use to orient yourself.

YOUR “SCRIPT”:

Hi, my name is _____, and I’m at _____ today. I got your name from _____ who said you would be a great candidate to help us launch a local campaign next month to fight for _____(goal) for _____(constituency).

Some things to keep in mind as you prepare:

1. **CONNECTION:** Let the person know who you are, why you care about this issue, and ask how they have been affected (drawing on your story of self and story of us).

Key questions to ask to get conversation going (remember to LISTEN):

- Have you heard about the movement we're building at _____? If not, let me tell you about it...
- Did you know about about your experience here, the people, and the _____ campaign being launched?
- How did you get started organizing? In what context? (on/off campus/in your community)
- How are you already involved with working on _____ issues?

Make note of the key parts from your story work that reveal your motivation to do this work:

2. **CONTEXT:** Explain what you and your team are planning. Provide details about who your group is, the exact challenges that move you to action right now, the real hope of what collective action can do, and a strategic choice.

3. **COMMITMENT (getting commitment):** Ask them "will you join me in launching this campaign to do _____ on _____ date? What do you think?"

- WAIT for them to think and respond.
- Confirm the DATE, TIME, LOCATION. "Can I count on you to be there?"
- "Who else can you suggest I contact? Or would you like to help me recruit?"

4. **CATAPULT (next steps):** Thank them for their time, find a time that you can follow up in a few days, explain the recruitment process going forward.

If they said "yes" to joining you, give them the chance to lead. What roles are empty on your leadership team? What work needs to get done to prepare for your event? How could they help you?

Step 3: Start Recruiting

When it is your turn to be an organizer, write your name in row 1. As you recruit, keep a tally of how many “asks” you make and how many commitments you actually get.

Individual team members' names:	How many “asks” did you make?	How many “asks” did you make?
YOUR NAME:		
Team member 2:		
Team member 3:		
Team member 4:		
Team member 5:		
Team member 6:		
WHOLE TEAM TOTALS		

Step 4: Team Report Back & Debrief (5 min)

When you gather to debrief, fill in the rest of the table above by having each member of your team report back the number of “asks” made and the number of commitments obtained. Tally up the totals for your whole team and see how it stacks up with your original goal.

Some final reflection...

Organizing is a practice. We learn by doing.

The five organizing practices are not perfectly sequential, they are interconnected and take place at the same time. You can also think of it as first telling a story of self, to connect with others, build relationships, create a story of us, develop a team, design a strategy, create a story of now that builds sense of urgency and take action.

1. **Telling Stories – Story of Self**
2. **Building Relationships**
3. **Structuring Teams**
4. **Telling Stories – Story of Us**
5. **Devising strategy**
6. **Telling Stories – Story of Now**
7. **Taking action**

Movements have diverse densities. Some have very specific constituencies, goals, agendas, locations, and meet and act together regularly. Others have multiple constituencies, issues, agendas and locations, meeting and acting together on specific movements around specific agendas. Other movements have very broad agendas, connecting a diverse range of people, organizations, collectives, movements, in a wide range of locations, occasionally acting together. Organizing can be adapted to neighborhood, community, local, national or global level.

This is one possible framework among many others. We invite you to take one which fits your world views, your cultural practices and your desire to organize for change. We'd like to share some resources that sister movements and organizations have created to support feminist movement building which we love at **SheDecides**.

Resources we love

On Feminist Movement Building

All About MOVEMENTS (CREA)

https://creaworld.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/All-About-Movements_Web.pdf

Feminist Action Lab (Restless Development)

<https://feministactionlab.restlessdevelopment.org/feminist-movements/>

Feminist Mentoring for Feminist Futures (CREA)

<https://creaworld.org/resource/feminist-mentoring-guide-for-feminist-futures/>

International Centre of Non-Violent Conflict

<https://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/>

We want to hear from you

Have you found this Playbook useful? Is there anything you'd like us to develop further? Please share your feedback with us [here](#).

About **SheDecides**.

SheDecides is a global political movement driving change for **bodily autonomy**, fueled by actions in communities with young people at its heart. The movement is made up of people who together are committed to organizing their people and networks to take collective action by Standing Up and Speaking Out for bodily autonomy.

Together, they are guided by the vision in the [SheDecides Manifesto](#)

SheDecides Vision of Change

Women and girls set the terms of the debate about their bodies, lives and futures.

SheDecides Theory of Change

Learn more about how we drive change [here](#).

SheDecides organizers are Standing Up, Speaking Out on diverse areas of bodily autonomy, including but not limited to work on:

- Abortion
- Bodily autonomy and human rights
- Child marriage
- Comprehensive Sexuality Education
- Contraception
- Female Genital Mutilation / Cutting
- Feminist leadership, activism and political representation
- Gender-Based Violence
- HIV/AIDS
- LGBTQIA+ rights
- Mental health and bodily autonomy
- Menstruation stigma / period poverty
- Racial justice and bodily autonomy
- Sex workers' rights
- Sexual harassment and abuse
- Sexual pleasure
- Youth leadership, activism and political representation

Join the movement, sign the manifesto: www.shedecides.com/manifesto

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