

# Campaign Planning 101: Intro to Power and Grassroots Organizing

## Learning Objectives:

*Skills, Knowledge, and Attitude which learners should take away from this session.*

- Know the difference between service-based, education-based, and change-based campaigns
- Understand the three types of power (*power over, power with, and power within*)

## Achievement Objectives:

*Tangible steps learners will take to advance real or simulated campaign work.*

- Read stories about action-takers and identify which story describes a strategic campaign
- Identify ways to better harness power with and power within in your organizing work.

**Time needed:** 70 minutes (1 hour 10 mins)

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Normal = say out loud

Underlined = flipchart this!

*Italics* = trainer notes/instructions

**Bold** = key point

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*Trainer Note: This training is most impactful when it is connected to relevant real-world issues that your participants are addressing in their organizing work. Trainers are encouraged to customize the training with stories of movements relevant to your issue or region.*

**Anchor:** The ANCHOR step invites learners to reflect on past experiences which relate to the learning of the session. (e.g. “Think back to a time when \_\_\_\_\_. What did that feel like?”)

## 1) Introduction [5 mins]

Before we start this training, I want to see something. Raise your hand if you’ve ever seen something really wrong in the world that needs to change, but felt powerless to do anything about it.

*Many Sprogers will raise hands, affirm the experience:* Yeah, I’ve felt that too. When we have to wake up every day and face climate change, racism, sexism, a world controlled by the wealthy, and other systems of oppression, it can sometimes get us feeling powerless. Our movements are up against a lot.

*Acknowledge the weight of that reflection. Ask everyone to take a deep breath with you, or several, and exhale together slowly.*

But we aren’t powerless. Social movements have given us lots of tools for making change.

This is the first Campaign Planning training. The work of organizing grassroots campaigns is all about helping people **maximize their power** to **achieve their goals**. When we organize strong campaigns, we make our movements more powerful and we can start to address the problems we see in the world.

Today, we’re going to start with digging into what we mean when we talk about grassroots campaigns. (**Don’t flipchart the training objectives this time – Sprogers will discover as they go in this session.**)

**Add:** The ADD step introduces new information and tools for learners to consider.

### 3) Three Stories [30 mins]

*This activity uses three stories to help the group understand the difference between campaigns that focus on education or volunteer work versus campaigns that get at the root of a problem. You can use the three stories in the Campaign Planning 101 handout or write your own stories that are relevant to your Sprog region, following the **GUIDELINES FOR WRITING STORIES** at the end of this session guide.*

*Ask Sprogers to turn to the three campaign stories printed in their handouts: To help understand what makes a grassroots campaign, we're going to reach about three different campaigns that each have a different kind of goal. In each story, the characters address the problems they face in a different way. As we read the stories, think about these questions:*

- What action does the character take to address the problems?
- What is the logic behind their efforts?

**1. Read the Stories:** *Have Sprogers read the stories aloud one at a time. After each story, refer back to the flipcharted questions and ask what Sprogers noticed about that story.*

- *Avoid revealing any answers. Instead, ask probing questions to guide the group towards discovering answers on their own. Ask probing follow-up questions: "Did the character in this story have a goal? How did they try to achieve that goal?"*
- *Notice and encourage differences of opinion: "So you think this character's goal was \_\_\_\_\_. Does anyone disagree?"*

**2. Reveal the Categories:** *When you've read through the three stories, reveal that they represent three different kinds of campaigns: Cover Up the Problem, Educate People About the Problem, Fix the Root of the Problem (flipchart the categories). Don't say much about each one, just ask Sprogers to get into pairs and discuss which story represents which type of campaign.*

**3. Discuss:** *Give pairs 5 minutes, then pause the conversations and ask a pair to share what they came up with. Whichever campaign they describe first, ask, "Who else thought that that one was \_\_\_\_\_?" Stick with that campaign story until there's rough consensus about why the label fits, then move on to the next one.*

- *Tease out the reasoning behind their answers: "How did you come to that answer?"*
- *When there is general consensus, check for comprehension: "Does everyone see how the speaking tour didn't get at the root of the problem? Is there anyone who's confused about why this is the story that fits the Educate People About the Problem category?"*

*After you've discussed all three, share a final takeaway:*

Many efforts by well-intentioned people don't actually work to solve the problems they intend to address. This doesn't mean we should reject these activities altogether. Education is a powerful and important tool for changed-based campaigns, and volunteer work can do a lot of good and help a lot of people even if it doesn't get at the roots of problems. But in most cases, **education and service work alone won't bring about the change we want to see.** In the SSC, we teach about how to use grassroots organizing to get at the roots of problems. We believe that this is how our efforts can have the greatest impact.

**Add:** The ADD step introduces new information and tools for learners to consider.

#### 4) Power [15 mins]

Lead a discussion about the change-based story to help Sproggers think about different types of power: Grassroots organizing is all about building power. With powerful campaigns, we can win the real change that we want in the world and address the roots of problems. Let's talk about power in the story we just read about the strategic campaign. **Who were the most powerful characters in that story?**

Have Sproggers call out responses and flipchart responses. There are no right or wrong answers! Tips for facilitating this discussion:

- Use brief follow-up questions ("Why did you say that character was the most powerful?")
- Encourage and offer different responses ("Does anyone think [character] was powerful?")
- Notice and encourage differences of opinion ("So you think [character] was the most powerful because \_\_\_\_? Who disagrees?")
- Point out themes in the conversation as you notice and affirm disagreements, keeping the three types of power in mind as you do this ("So I'm hearing that these characters had power because \_\_\_\_\_, and this character was powerful for a different reason." or "It sounds like there are a range of different types of power being discussed.")

When you've collected a range of options and opinions, explain that there are three types of power: **Power Over, Power Within, and Power With.**

- 1) **Power Over:** When we think of power, we typically think of people who have Power Over us or others – the power to force us to do something against our will. Power Over comes from access to resources or formal positions of power. It can also come from systems of oppression that give some people power over others. We've all experienced someone having Power Over us, but people with marginalized identities – especially those who hold multiple different marginalized identities – experience this most intensely. **Where in the story did you see Power Over?**
- 2) **Power Within:** Every person in this room also has another kind of power: the power to decide what to do, how to live, and when to act. You accessed that power when you decided to come to this training. We call this Power Within. **Can you think of examples from the story that showed Power Within?**
- 3) **Power With:** Last but not least is Power With, the power that comes from cooperation, solidarity, and community. It's the ability we have to take action and influence change when we unite with others. **Where in the story did you see Power With?**

With grassroots organizing, we can channel our **Power Within** and build our **Power With** to overcome **Power Over**. A united movement can shift the balance of power from the big dogs at top to regular folks like us. This is another way that grassroots organizing is different from education or volunteer work: **grassroots campaigns shift the balance of power, and the other kinds don't.**

**Apply:** The APPLY step invites learners to utilize the new information in a task, challenge, or focused conversation. (e.g. practice, application, case studies, compare, etc.)

#### 5) People Power in Our Movements [10 mins]

Think about the three stories you just heard and the idea of power over, power within, and power with. And now think about the work you are involved in, or plan to be involved in, when you get back home.

- What types of power do your opponents have? What gives them that power?
- What types of power does your community have? What gives you that power?
- How could you and your team better use power within and power with to dismantle power over dynamics in your community?

*Have Sprogers discuss with a neighbor for a few minutes, then take a few answers in the full group.*

**Away:** The AWAY step invites learners to connect their new understanding to the real world context of their lives. (e.g. a personal action plan, commitment, projection into future, etc.)

## 5) Closing [5 mins]

*Introduce the below quote. To close, circle back to the questions about feeling powerless. Offer concluding reflections or words to leave Sprogers thinking about the power they do have. For example:*

We started this training on a heavy note, acknowledging that our movements are up against a lot. But we can also see that our movements and our communities are powerful. And throughout history, we have so many stories of people recognizing their own power and uniting to bring about great change. Knowing our own power can be a source of inspiration.

In a democracy there are only two types of power, there's organized people and organized money, and organized money only wins when people aren't organized. -- Benjamin Todd Jealous

*Encourage Sprogers to take 5 minutes write down their reflections about what makes them and their communities powerful. Give a moment for writing, then invite everyone to take a deep breath together again.*

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## GUIDELINES FOR WRITING STORIES

### OBJECTIVES:

- *Give specific, grounded understanding of the differences between the three different campaign types. Campaign strategy is a notoriously difficult concept to teach, and it helps for Sprogers to have concrete examples to discuss and work through.*
- *Provide a common anchor for the group. The stories give participants who don't have much organizing experience a platform to relate their learning to in tangible ways.*
- *Highlight campaigns in your region and/or movement. This can also be an opportunity to integrate Anti-Oppression lessons into the Campaign Planning workshop track by spotlighting real-world groups working to fight systemic oppression.*

**THE THREE STORIES:** Each story should describe a different type of campaign.

- (1) **An educational campaign.** The first campaign should be one that focuses on education. This story should show how education based campaigns are effective at spreading awareness or knowledge about an issue, but do not directly solve the issue.
- (2) **A volunteer campaign.** The second story is about a campaign that focuses on volunteer efforts as its primary means of creating change. This story should show that volunteer projects can be effective at addressing symptoms, but even though they can have positive impacts, they don't usually address the root of the problem.
- (3) **A campaign that addresses the root of a problem.** The third story highlights a campaign that addresses the root of a problem directly to solve an issue. The campaign in this story can use education or volunteer work as tactics, but its primary goal should be to tackle problems at their roots. The campaign in this story should include a clear long-term goal, at least one short-term goal, a target, and a series of escalating tactics. In other words, it should have every component of the Anatomy of a Campaign from the Campaign Planning 201 session.

**WRITING TIPS:** Use your creative writing skills to make the stories interesting and clear! The basic outline should look like:

1. **Exposition:** Introduces important background to the story (location, characters, setting, dynamics). This is where you will lay the ground for the change being made in the story. What is the problem? Why is it a problem? How has it affected the community?
2. **Rising Action:** A series of related incidents builds toward the point of greatest interest, the rising action leads to the characters taking action. Why were they called to action? What problem did they see? How did they decide what to do?
3. **Climax:** The climax is the turning point, which changes the character's fate. This is where the character of your story takes action, where we can see what type of campaign they took on: education-based, volunteer-based, or change-based.
4. **Falling Action/Conclusion:** The conflict between the protagonist and the antagonist unravels, with the protagonist winning or losing against the antagonist. This is where you bring your story to a close and we see the outcome of the action your character chose to take.

**TIPS FOR PRACTICING ANTI-OPPRESSION:**

- Before writing each story, you will need to research and select which stories to share. Be sure to take into account what stories are perpetuated in organizing narratives, and whose voices are more rarely heard. Seek out stories about frontline communities or impacted populations taking action on issues that impact them.
- Consider the backgrounds of your characters. Make sure your stories represent diverse identities.
- If your Sprog team has a connection to a frontline community or organization in your region, you could consider writing your change-based campaign story about a real campaign of theirs. You could then ask someone from the group to give feedback about how you have portrayed their story. However, is only appropriate for groups with whom you have an existing relationship – for example, groups you personally belong to or have worked with, or someone you have invited to speak or present at your Sprog and will therefore be paying for their time. Do not ask a frontline group to do work for you without any compensation or benefit to them.