

Community Organizing: Community Change

Participant's Manual

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Written by:
Abid Ullah Jan

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Learning Objectives

By the end of the workshop, participants will be able to:

1. See themselves as community-change agents.
2. Understand the elements, approaches, and dynamics of community organizing.
3. Use communication strategies and personal experience to enhance their abilities to reach specific audiences.
4. Develop specific strategies to overcome obstacles and enhance opportunities to advance an ATOD problem prevention campaign.
5. Describe the stages of organizing a community.
6. Describe how to identify issues, supporters, and opponents.
7. Explore ways to organize supporters into an action group.
8. Identify various types of mobilization tactics.
9. Explore ways to use mobilization tactics to create a desired change.
10. Weigh the use of different mobilization tactics to accomplish the short-term objectives and long-range goals of their struggle towards sustainable development and poverty alleviation.

Agenda

DAY ONE

- 9:00 Opening Session**
- 9:50 Introduction to Community Organizing**
- 11:00 Break**
- 11:15 The Art of Communication - Part I**
- 12:00 Lunch**
- 1:30 The Art of Communication - Part II**
- 2:45 Break**
- 3:00 Obstacles and Opportunities**
- 4:10 The Stages of Community Organization**
- 4:20 Closing Session - Day One**
- 4:30 End Day One**

DAY TWO

- 9:00 Opening Session - Day Two**
- 9:15 Targeting**
- 10:15 Break**
- 10:30 Organizing**
- 11:30 Mobilizing**
- 11:45 Lunch**
- 1:15 Mobilizing Tactics - Part I**
- 3:15 Break**
- 3:30 Mobilizing Tactics - Part II**
- 4:10 Closing Session - Day Two**
- 4:30 End Day Two**

The Key Elements Of Community Organizing

The Four P's

- 1. People**
- 2. Problem**
- 3. Participation**
- 4. Process and/or Power**

The Two Approaches to Community Organizing

1. Process approach:

People are organized to facilitate communication, education, hope, awareness, and a sense of community. By working together, the group learns how to address common problems and achieves specific objectives.

2. Power approach:

People are organized to acquire and demonstrate power. The threat or use of power helps to influence specific individuals to correct specific problems, create system changes, and resolve conflicts.

NOTES: COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

About the Presenter:

- An effective communicator uses personal experiences—his/her own and those of the audience—to build bridges of understanding.
- An effective organizer knows that when people are concerned or feel threatened, their desire to listen increases.
- An organizer's most powerful communication tool is a question.
- An organizer should always acknowledge the audience's values and norms.
- The factors that enhance the ability of the communicator include the person's:
 - prestige
 - attractiveness
 - role
 - likeness to audience
 - credibility.
- Don't argue from a self-interest perspective.
- Be candid as much as possible—some degree of disclosure is helpful.
- It's okay to identify your biases.
- Don't use responses that sound rehearsed.
- Anticipate difficult questions and think through responses.

About the Message:

- How you frame the issue also determines the effectiveness of the communication.
- An effective communicator will determine the audience's concern and attitude about the issue and then shape a message to address the factors.
- Messages that acknowledge both sides of an issue are more convincing to those with a less favorable initial attitude.
- Avoid a strong appeal to fear—the audience will think you are overreacting or it may become immobilized.

NOTES: COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES (continued)

- If you use fear, follow with specific actions that the audience can do to reduce the threat.
- Avoid attacking your audience, or it will get defensive and discount your presentation.
- When possible, it is helpful to start your response by agreeing with some element of the other person's remark/question.
- A soft sell is usually most effective.
- Try to illuminate the issues of agreement and outline possible solutions rather than intensifying the points of disagreement.
- Use facts, figures, and feelings to back up your comments.
- Humanize the exchange.
- Use local examples.

About the Audience:

- Audiences sometimes listen to, understand, and respond to a message, while at other times they avoid, distort, and reject the message.
- People listen to people with whom they agree. However, when they disagree with the presenter, they attempt to avoid or minimize the importance of the message and discredit the communicator.
- Do not start a presentation with, "You may not agree ..." for you will lose the audience as it silently prepares counter arguments.
- People's desire to develop counter arguments can be reduced if you present a mild dose of the opposing views along with your arguments.
- People understand only in terms of their own experiences; therefore, you need to communicate within the experiences of your target audience.
- When we can't find an experience to facilitate understanding with another party, we must create an experience for that party.
- Make sure to address the underlying factors and concerns that are revealed when someone makes a statement or asks a question.

NOTES: COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES
(continued)

- You can increase an audience's commitment by asking them to take a public stand—i.e., a show of hands to support. . .
- It is helpful to start any presentation with a joke, story, or quote. Make sure that it is matched to your message and your audience.

Communication Strategies

About the Presenter:

About the Message:

About the Audience:

TIP SHEET: COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

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WORKSHEET: ANSWERING TOUGH QUESTIONS

QUESTION/STATEMENT:

RESPONSE:

STRATEGIES:

The Seven Stages of Community Organizing

Stage 1. Getting Started

**Stage 2. Targeting Issues and Setting
Priorities**

Stage 3. Targeting Supporters and Opponents

Stage 4. Planning for Action

**Stage 5. Organizing a Power/Process
Structure**

**Stage 6. Mobilizing the Group to Achieve
Small Victories**

Stage 7. Continuing the Process

NOTES: THE SEVEN STAGES OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

Stage 1: Getting Started

The organizer must:

- Be invited by the community, by its leadership
- Help to highlight frustrations and raise issues
- Cultivate hope for a better way
- Instill a desire for change
- Be seen as a winner
- Demonstrate stick-to-itiveness
- Help the community see why this effort is important from its perspective
- Help people feel that they have the power to make the necessary changes
- Help develop a core group of concerned citizens—informal and formal community leaders.

Stage 2: Targeting Issues and Setting Priorities

NOTE: The term "targeting" as used in this and other stages relates to the need for organizers and community-change organizations to identify and select specific issues and individuals that they desire to affect by an action or development.

With the assistance of the organizer and a core group of community members, the host community must:

- Identify important issues and commonly held problems
- Define desired changes
- Rank problems and set priorities
- Develop a shared vision for problem resolution
- Understand that controversy is a part of creating change—without controversy people may not be energized enough to act. A controversial issue is a redundancy.

Stage 3: Targeting Supporters and Opponents

At this stage, the organizer and a core group of community members must focus on the priority issue and begin to:

- Identify people—supporters—who are concerned about these issues, who are willing to work toward the desired change, and who have the ability to create the change
- Identify people—opponents—who will stand in the way of the desired change and who have the ability to make or prevent the desired change.

Stage 4: Planning for Action

The organizer and a core group of community members must:

- Develop a plan of action to effectively address the presenting issue/problem
- Assess the current power structures and other factors that create or maintain the problem
- Analyze the environment—examine the external and internal obstacles, external and internal opportunities, and resources
- Define the targets—those who are most affected by the problem, those who can help create the desired change, and those who will stand in the way of the desired change
- Develop strategies for organizing the supporters into a group/organization to address the issue and the opponents
- Design strategies for mobilizing the organized group to create the desired change.

Stage 5: Organizing a Power/Process Structure

NOTE: Change comes from a group of people with a shared vision and shared concerns, who are willing to combine their resources to work together on a specific set of issues. It comes from organizing people into a group/organization that uses process and power to create change.

The organizer and community members must:

- Educate and energize the public on the targeted issue
- Cultivate relationships with supporters
- Design structural and communication links for addressing the identified problems, bringing the supporters together, and implementing the action strategies that will create the desired change

- Bring the supporters together to form a group that will work together to create the desired change
- Develop leaders to support the agenda and implement the action plan.

Stage 6: Mobilizing the Group to Achieve Small Victories

At this stage, the organized group of supporters executes the tactics to create the desired change.

The organizer must help the group to:

- Select the appropriate tactics
- Keep the actions simple and fun
- Own the actions
- Use tactics that will achieve small victories to advance the desired change.

Stage 7: Continuing the Process

The organizer must work with the organized group to:

- Make sure it receives feedback
- Monitors actions
- Evaluates effectiveness of strategy on overall goal
- Redefines actions
- Identifies new problems, priorities, and strategies
- Implements revised action plan.

COMMUNITY ISSUE CASE STUDIES

Community Issue #1. Signboards:

Religious scholars from three Mosques in village Khanpur , an ethnically diverse rural set up, have expressed their outrage over the number of sign boards in their community that advertise cigarettes and violent movies. The three religious leaders wrote a letter to the editor of the newspaper calling for the removal of all billboards in Khanpur: "The messages these signs present are helping to kill our community, our families, and our children. We want a neighborhood that is free of these harmful messages." Your Community Partnership wants to get involved with this issue.

Community Issue #2. Tree Cutting-Free Zones:

At a recent Regional Development Organisation(RDO) meeting of different village organisations, the participants were told about another county's use of designated "Forest harvesting-Free Zones" in mountainous regions as a strategy to crack down on a deforestation. One RDO member expressed interest in this strategy and met informally with his MNA to solicit support for legislation to implement this strategy; the local MNA, however, was not interested. The lawmaker thought it would be too difficult to pass a Forest harvesting-Free Zone bill, too costly to print the Tree Cutting-Free Zone signs, and not likely to make any real difference. Your Community Partnership wants to get involved with this issue.

Community Issue #3. Lack of Drinking Water:

A few angry citizens in the quiet community of Mardan met a few weekends ago to discuss what they could do to get rid of troubles they are going through due to lack of drinking water supply in the village. Women in particular spend long hours to go and fetch water a few miles down the dangerous track. Your Community Partnership wants to get involved with this issue.

Community Issue #4. The Link Road:

Your village has three community organisations. The small track that links your village to the main road is not jeepable. All of your transportation is done with the help of donkey and mules. It becomes even harder when someone gets sick and moving him up to the main road to take him to the hospital becomes an uphill task. The whole community is in need of a wider link road to the main high way. Your Partnership wants to get involved.

Case Studies

Community Issue #1.

Signboards

Community Issue #2.

Tree Cutting-Free Zones

Community Issue #3.

Drinking water supply Scheme

Community Issue #4.

Link Road Construction

Targeting Supporters

Supporters:

- **Assess who is most affected by this issue.**
- **Assess who has the potential to help you create the desired change.**

Targeting Issues

Issues:

- **Convert private troubles into public issues.**
- **Select an issue that people can get excited about.**
- **Define what change you want to see occur.**
- **Select an issue that is winnable.**

Targeting Opponents

Opponents:

- **Assess who has the power to stop or hinder the desired change.**

Types of Mobilization Tactics

- **Persuasion**
- **Negotiation**
- **Direct Action**

Types of Direct Action