



## **The Cycle of Organizing & Leadership Development**

### **Listen Challenge Act**

Organizing is about listening, challenging people to come forward on their deeply felt interest, and acting together;

LEADERS are people who can organize others to act together around shared goals. If you listen to others and can effectively challenge them to act with you around shared goals, then you can be an effective leader; relationships through listening lead to the power of organized numbers which leads to the ability to accomplish meaningful changes. All organizing involves a continuing cycle of listening campaigns, research/strategy, action, and evaluation:

### **Listening Campaigns/Outreach**

By organized listening campaigns within congregations/organizations to listen to the stories of people's deeply felt concerns about where they live and where they work. This is done by either or both 1:1 relational meetings and house meeting/small group meetings. From these listening campaigns a congregation/organization can say these are the top priority problems our members are concerned about and these are the stories that illustrate that problem.

Leaders are those who do these 1:1 meetings and/or organize these house meetings and then can effectively challenge those people to join them in taking action together on solutions to their concerns.

### **Research and Strategy on moving from Problem to Issue**

A committee of leaders or Issue Team take a priority problem from the listening campaign and do research to come up with a proposed solution to part of the problem. This is called an "issue" which is a proposal to solve at least part of the larger problem. Example: too many low wage jobs is a problem and raising the minimum wage or increasing funding for job training are issues to partly solve this larger problem.

To come up with the issue and proposed solution the Issue Team "sifts":

- a. What they initially feel might be solutions
- b. What are "best practices" done elsewhere that could be solutions here
- c. What laws, regulations, precedents here or elsewhere could justify your proposed solution

- d. What public official or corporate leader has the power to say yes to your proposed solution
- e. Who are potential allies who will support your campaign and/or have some relationship to the officials with the power to say yes.
- f. What proposal might be "winnable" based on how much power your organization has.

All this helps the Issue Team come up with an issue and proposal for a solution that they will organize to get achieved.

### **3. Action**

We take "action" to get a reaction both from those with power we seek to engage with and from within our organization to come together for a common purpose. The Issue Team also develops an overall strategy and set of specific tactics to get something done on the issue.

Example: A Public Action Meeting to which the responsible officials are invited and asked for commitments to the organization's proposals. The organization organizes large numbers of people to attend to show large scale support for their proposals.

Other actions can be large scale turnouts at public hearings, meetings by district with legislators, large scale letter writing and phone calling efforts, referendum votes, etc.

### **4. Evaluation**

Evaluation means learning from your campaign of outreach, research, and action. Short evaluations for 15 minutes follow any action meeting and then organizations have whole meetings evaluating questions like--What did we accomplish so far? What went well and why? What hasn't been as effective and why? What are our next steps?

These "next steps" often leads to further outreach, further research, and/or further action; the cycle continues. What's learned through evaluation can be as important as what's actually been accomplished so far because it helps you be more effective in the future.

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