Community Organising Fellowship

Glossaries

Campaign Strategy

Advocacy
Involves working to achieve change on a particular issue by seeking to influence public policy – including laws, regulations and government practices. Advocacy work can include community organising and grassroots mobilisation, policy development, lobbying, and campaigning. Systemic advocacy involves working for long-term social changes to ensure collective rights and interests are served through legislation, policies and practices.

Ally
A person, group, or institution that is working together with another person, group, or institution for mutual benefit or to achieve some common purpose.

Campaign
An organised sequence of tactics directed at a certain target, which is designed to achieve a specific goal.

Campaign Strategy
A theory/plan for the process of turning the resources we have into the power we need to get what we want. The written collection of ideas, information, analysis, and plans to make a campaign happen. Campaign strategy will guide what you do and it should be updated regularly as the campaign is implemented and the situation changes.

Campaign Action Plan
The work plan for different projects or phases of a campaign.

Campaign Pathway
The articulation of how change will be won by your campaign, and what steps are required along the way, from where you are now to the achievement of your campaign goal. This is done by mapping the series of intermediate outcomes - or steps - that need to happen along the way to reach your overall longer-term goal. There may be more than one pathway to victory.

Campaign Timeline
A visual representation of the sequential order and timing of your campaign tactics designed to achieve a particular outcome. A campaign timeline has clear phases, with a foundational building period, a kick-off, and series of successive peaks that crescendo in the achievement of an outcome. The timeline will also demonstrate how new power and capacity will be built over time.

Goal
The aim or purpose toward which a campaign is directed. Goals are the longer-term changes you want to achieve. Achievement of your goals brings you closer to your vision. Goals are sometimes interchangeably referred to as objectives. Goals and objectives should be SMARTIE: Strategic, measurable, achievable, resourced, time-bound, inclusive, and equitable.

Issue
A specific challenge that is separated out from the larger problem. An issue is a solution or partial solution to a problem.

Monitoring and Evaluation
Monitoring is a continuous assessment on the progress of ongoing campaign implementation to determine if the desired outputs, outcomes, and objectives have been achieved so that action can be taken to correct and improve as quickly as possible. Evaluation is the process of assessing your actions in the context of your specific objectives, and determining what worked, what didn't, and what you would do differently next time. Evaluation should include regular reflection on monitored activities. Frequent evaluation hones and builds the skills, leadership, and experience of everyone working together.

Outcomes
The intermediate objectives or changes that need to happen along the way to reach your overall longer-term goal.

Outputs
The activities and tactics of your campaign designed to bring about outcomes.

Opponent
A person, group, or institution with conflicting interests who competes or fights with us in the struggle for power and control.

Power
The capacity of individuals, groups, or institutions to determine who gets what, who does what, who decides what, and who sets the agenda. Power is the ability to achieve purpose. Analysing power and power structures is at the heart of community organising and campaign strategy development.

Power Mapping
A visual tool used to identify the best individuals to target, influence, or ally with for a successful campaign, based on an assessment of their power, relationships, and stance on a given issue.

Spectrum of Allies
A visual tool to map the spread of potential allies, opponents, targets, and influencers on an issue - spread across a spectrum, from those who are the most active supporters to the most active opponents.

Situational Analysis
The process of identifying and evaluating the various internal and external conditions that affect a community, organisation, or campaign, including potential strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Stakeholder
People, groups, or institutions that are connected to your issue. They may support your campaign, be adversely affected by the issue in question, have the power to change the situation, or even be responsible for the problem you have identified.

Tactics
The short-term actions we take to achieve a specific campaign outcome.

Target
The person (always a person, never an institution or group) who has the power to give you what you want, who you will direct your campaign action at. This is your primary target. You may also identify secondary targets who hold power and influence in relation to your target.

Theory of Change
Your articulation of how and why you expect a particular change to happen. This needs to be based on your analyses of community, context, problems, issues, and power, as different situations require different theories of change. Theory of change generally includes what your group will do, what change you want to achieve as a result, and a logical argument for why you think your action will lead to this change.

Vision
Your inspiring and motivating picture of the world you want to see. A vision statement is key for communicating about the world you're seeking to create, and motivating people to join you in working for this.

Community Organising

Alliance
People or groups who identify a shared interest or mutual benefit and work together to make an impact.

Coaching
Supporting people to achieve their potential and purpose by enhancing the skills, resources, and creativity they already have. Coaching helps build awareness, empowers choice, and supports learning rather than teaching.

Coalitions
Networks or alliances based on shared goals and responsibilities. Coalitions might be formal or informal, short or long term.

Community
A group of people who share common values, identities, or interests.

Constituency
A community of people who have committed to stand together and act on behalf of their shared values, interests, or concerns. An organiser's job is to turn a community into a constituency.

Community Mapping
The process of incorporating, integrating and summarising information about your community to support the building of campaigns, constituencies, and alliances. Promotes agency and empowerment through active participation of individuals and groups.

Community Organising
The process of building power. A form of leadership that enables people to turn the resources they have into the power they need to make the change they want.

Community Organiser
A person who identifies, recruits, and develops the leadership of others; builds community around that leadership; and builds power from the resources of that community. Organisers bring people together, challenging them to act on behalf of their shared values and beliefs. The community organiser is fundamentally about developing and unleashing the primary source of power available: ourselves.

Facilitation/Facilitator
A leadership skill that empowers and enables a group to achieve their purpose.

Iron rule
Don't do for others what they can do for themselves. This 'rule' is at the heart of community organising. Organisers must focus on building the capacity and leadership of others, instead of acting 'for' them.

Leadership
Accepting responsibility for enabling others to achieve purpose in the face of uncertainty.

Leadership Identification
The practice of assessing people's leadership potential by determining their motivations, skills, capacity, commitment, emotional and cultural intelligence.

Leadership Development
The practice of building people's capacity to act on their goals and achieve their purpose.
Moving a person from being an action-taker to an action-maker. Leadership development without leadership identification is like riding a bicycle without wheels.

Mobilising/Mobilisation
Reaching out to people who agree with your cause/issue/campaign and asking them to be a part of planned action. Mobilisation refers to large numbers of people engaged in planned action. Mobilising is often confused with organising.

Public Narrative
A leadership practice of translating values into action. Public narrative is woven from three elements: a story of why I have been called (a story of self); a story of why we have been called (a story of us); and a story of the urgent challenge on which we are called to act (a story of now).

Political Economy
The study of how social, economic, and political systems are linked. Includes analysis of social power and relationships between people, markets, and the state. How phenomena such as power inequality shape and are shaped by institutions, laws, and political behaviour.

Relational Meetings
One-to-one conversations which build, deepen, or maintain working relationships by sharing stories and gaining a common understanding of each other's values and motivations. Relational meetings build trust, motivation, and energy between people, which leads to effective collaboration.

Relational Organising
The process of building power through one-to-one meetings with leaders and potential leaders or allies. The goal of relational organising is to build public relationships with trust and a shared vision to act together. They are also a process of reconnecting with and sharing our own values and motivations for action.

Social Movement
Effort of social changemakers to engage power holders and society at large in addressing a systemic problem or injustice while promoting an alternative vision or solution. Movements are more than an issue-based campaign or a single organisation. Large-scale social movements are usually made up of lots of campaigns, communities, organisations, and alliances.

Movement Building
When people and communities working to address injustice realise that their struggles are related and that their shared vision is more likely to be realised by working together. Movements are created by establishing formal and informal relationships between individuals, communities, and organisations working on related issues and problems, building trust and supporting each others' efforts.

Story
How we interact with each other about values; how we share experiences with each other, counsel each other, comfort each other, and inspire each other to action.

Solidarity and Justice

Ableism
A system that places value on people's lives, bodies, and minds based on socially constructed ideas of normal, intelligence, performance, and productivity; determining who is valuable and worthy based on their appearance or ability to fulfil social expectations.

Accessibility
Describes a place, practice, or event that meets the access needs of everyone involved, allowing for their full participation.

Ally
Someone who makes the commitment and effort to recognise their privilege and work in solidarity with oppressed groups in the struggle for justice. Allies understand that it is in their own interest to end all forms of oppression, even those they may benefit from in concrete ways, because of interdependence and the greater importance of collective liberation.

Anti-Racism

The work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. Anti-racism tends to be an individualised approach, and set up in opposition to individual racist behaviours and impacts. However, as organisers we must strive to consistently practice anti-racism in our work, and with our organisations and communities.

Caucusing

A caucus is an intentionally created space for those who share an identity to convene for learning, support, and connections. Racial identity caucuses are used in antiracism organising. For white people, a caucus provides time and space to work explicitly and intentionally on understanding white culture and white privilege and to increase one's critical analysis around these concepts. A white caucus also puts the onus on white people to teach each other about these ideas, rather than placing a burden on First Nations people and people of colour to teach them. For people of colour, a caucus is a place to work with peers to address the impact of racism, to interrupt experiences of internalised racism, and to create a space for healing and working for individual and collective liberation.

Cisheteropatriarchy

Used to explain the privileges and power of men and how society is organised to sustain male power. Acknowledges how the oppression of those who do not identify as cisgender or heterosexual/straight is enforced through the maintenance of a gender binary.

Colonialism

A practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another, to acquire and exploit resources. The end result is often the formation of a colony, and a conversion to a settler-colonial state. Colonisation is more than physical. It is also cultural and psychological in determining whose knowledge is privileged.

Community Care

The way we as communities meet each other's needs and prioritise wellness while living within systems of oppression that perpetuate harm. Self care isn't possible without community care.

Critical Race Theory

Examines the social construction of race that is used to oppress and exploit people of colour. Race is not biological. Racism is normalised through laws and institutions as they function to create and maintain social, economic, and political inequalities.

Culture

A social system of meaning and custom that is developed by a group of people to assure its adaptation and survival.

Disability justice

A social justice movement which focuses on examining disability and ableism as they relate to other forms of oppression and identity such as race, class and gender. There are 10 principles of disability justice: intersectionality, leadership of those with lives experience, anti-capitalist, commitment to cross movement organising, recognising wholeness, sustainability, commitment to solidarity, interdependence, collective access, collective liberation.

Discrimination
The unequal treatment of members of various groups based on race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion and other categories.

Equity
Recognises systems, practices, and policies that limit the full participation of marginalised groups within society; understands that people have different privileges, resources, and circumstances that require different amounts of support to be met with fair opportunities.

Ethnicity
A social construct that divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as shared sense of group membership, values, behavioural patterns, language, political and economic interests, history and ancestral geographical base.

Gender equity
Working towards justice and liberation for all genders, especially those traditionally marginalised outside the gender binary.

Institutional racism
The underlying racial injustices that are embedded within institutions and organisations that maintain racial discrimination and inequity.

Intersectionality
Understanding how systems of oppression like racism, sexism, ableism, and classism connect to one another, combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalised individuals or groups.

Intersectional feminism
Recognition that gender inequity must be tackled in an intersectional manner that understands all systems of oppression are inherently connected and does not see issues in isolation.

Justice framework
A framework that recognises the root causes of problems in systems of oppression and strives to dismantle these systems.

Oppression
The systematic subjugation of one social group by a more powerful social group for the social, economic, and political benefit of the more powerful social group. Oppression = Power + Prejudice.

Power
The capacity of individuals, groups, or institutions to determine who gets what, who does what, who decides what, and who sets the agenda.

Prejudice
A pre-judgment or unjustifiable attitude based on limited information, often based on stereotypes, that deny the right of individuals to be recognised and treated as individuals.

Race
Race is a made-up social, political, and economic construct, and not biological. The term 'white' was constructed to combine various European groups against First Nations people and people of colour in the struggle for resources. In order to justify the idea of a white race, all institutions were used to promote the idea of white supremacy.

Racism
A system of advantage based on race. Racism = Race prejudice + social & institutional power.

Racial Justice
The systematic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. Racial justice goes beyond anti-racism. It is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities, but also the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures.

Self-determination
The right and ability for communities and nations to freely pursue their political, social, economic, and cultural paths; and make their own decisions rather than decisions made through a colonial government.

Social and Institutional Power
Access to resources, the ability to influence others, access to decision-makers to get what you want, the ability to self-determine and define reality for yourself and others.

Solidarity
Long term commitments to unity with those experiencing harm, oppression, or struggle; mutual support between groups in shared struggle.

Systems of oppression
System that dehumanises and devalues groups of people in ways that result in violence, dispossession, disempowerment, displacement; these systems require power and grant privilege, which also creates barriers for us in caring for one another.

White Privilege
Refers to the unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits and choices bestowed on people solely because they are white. Generally white people who experience such privilege do so without being conscious of it, because of the system that makes them seem normal. The system includes internal and external manifestations at the individual, interpersonal, cultural, and institutional levels.

Interpersonal White Privilege
Behaviour between people that consciously or unconsciously reflects white superiority or entitlement.

Cultural White Privilege
A set of dominant cultural assumptions about what is good, normal or appropriate that reflects Western European white world views and dismisses or demonises other worldviews.

Institutional White Privilege
Policies, practices and behaviours of institutions - such as schools, legislatures, judiciaries, and not-for-profit organisations - that have the effect of maintaining or increasing accumulated advantages for those groups currently defined as white, and maintaining or increasing disadvantages for those racial or ethnic groups not defined as white.

White Supremacy
The ideology that white people and the ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions of white people are superior to people of colour and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions.