

Community Organizing: Mobilizing and Creating Change

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What is Community Organizing?

- Getting something done together that you can't do alone.
- Building power so that people who don't usually have a voice are included.
- Developing new community leaders to make decisions and take action together.
- Solving problems not "for" but "with" people.



Community Organizing Includes:

- Listening
- Relationship Building
- Challenge
- Action
- Evaluation
- Reflection
- Celebration



Leadership Development

- Continuing to find and teach *new* leaders the skills to make decisions and take action together.
- Effort to share responsibility for the group by asking others to take on important tasks and weigh in on decisions.
- Don't go it alone. Take responsibility for strengthening the group by building individuals' skills and strengths.
- Leadership Development means we are each a model for improving (developing) the skills that we bring to the group, and we encourage others to do the same.



Giving Everyone an Equal Voice

- Everyone is a Teacher and Everyone is a Learner.
- Encouraging those most affected by an issue to represent themselves and their issue.
- Being patient with all skill levels and capacity is critical.



What Does Organizing Accomplish?

- Strives for concrete improvements in peoples lives.
- Makes people aware of their own power. All people can be leaders.
- Organizing brings people who are impacted directly into the situation with decision-makers.
- Changes the balance of power, building organizations that those in power will always have to consider.

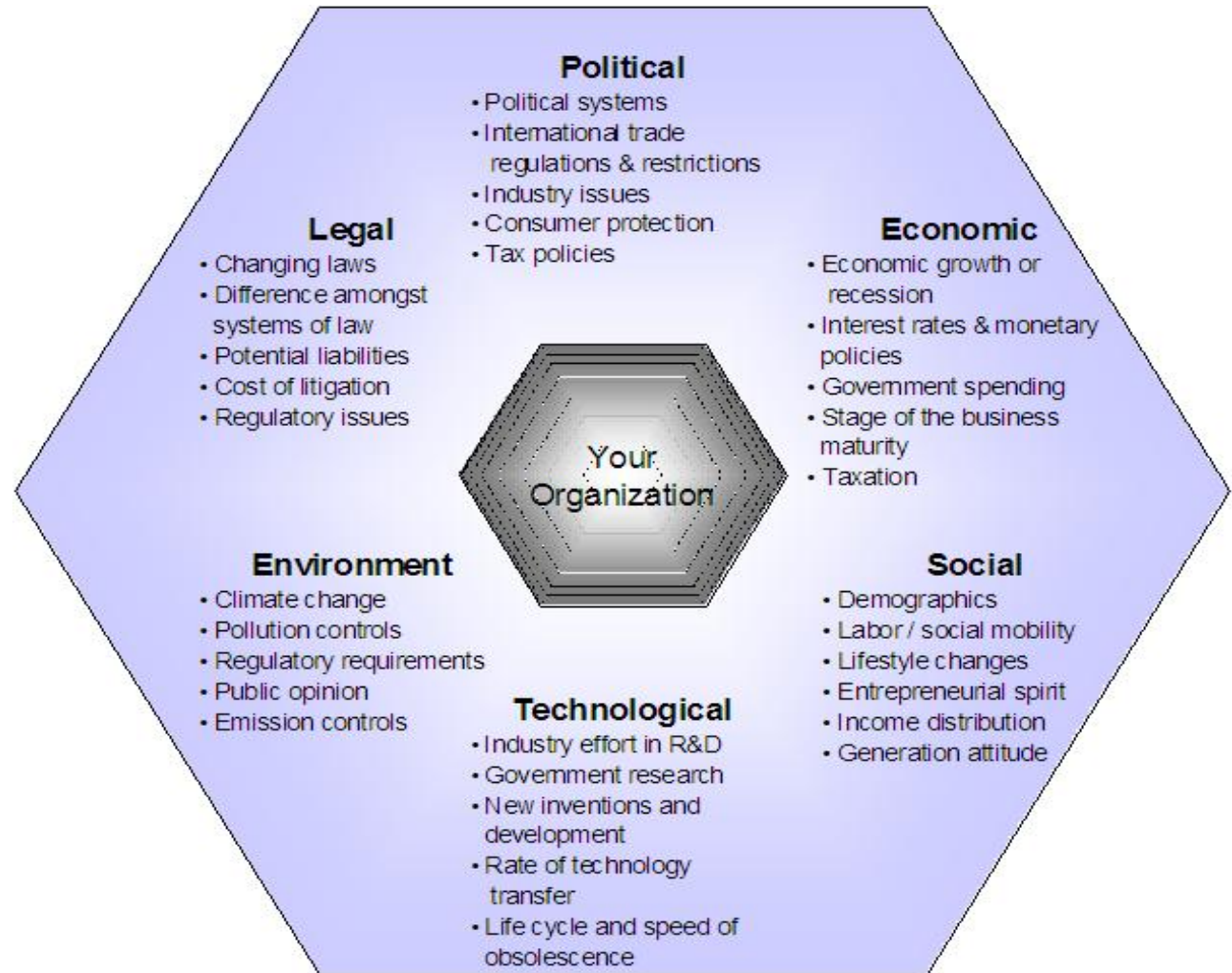


Adapted From Midwest Academy

Environmental Scan

- Environmental scanning meaning considering factors that will affect your group/project/organization

From the Greenhill Group



Environmental Scan

- It is important to consider all of these factors and how you will respond to each.
- Not all areas will require action, and your group may need to prioritize their strategies.
- An Environmental Scan can also help you indentify problem areas before they are a problem.
- You have choices, you can:
 - Address
 - Table, save for another time
 - Ignore



Learn More: Assessment

- **Part of an Environmental Scan includes doing a formal or informal assessment. When you are preparing to organize or mobilize you may want to consider the following questions:**
 - Who (or what geographic area) do we want to organize?
 - Why do we want to organize this group/area?
 - What problems can we already identify?
 - Who will be involved in the organizing effort?
 - What do we know about our community/issue?
 - What are strengths?
 - What are weaknesses?
 - Who do we already know that we can involve?
 - What is our self-interest in wanting to organize this group?
 - What are some of the end results we hope to achieve?
 - What resources do we already have?
 - What challenges and/or obstacles do we know about?
 - What is everyone involved willing and able to contribute to this effort?

Going Beyond: Outreach

- **Once you and your group have more clearly what you are going to focus on it's important to reach out to others. Remember you can't go it alone. *Outreach is a way of connecting to others or getting them involved.***
 - How will we conduct outreach?
 - Who is responsible?
 - What is our timeline for outreach?
 - What will the focus of our outreach be? What will we ask people about? What do we hope to share with them?
 - Do volunteers involved in outreach need training and practice?
 - What do we want to happen after the initial outreach?
 - When is our goal to have our first meeting/event/action?
 - How will we facilitate developing an action plan with the group?
 - What else do we need to know to work on this issue?

It Can be Done!

- Provider Network Group, Olmsted County MN
 - Employment Providers engaging community partners in supporting employment basics
 - Training day for residential and county employees
 - Finding joint solutions



- Autism Awareness & Support, Metro MN
 - Bringing together providers to seek grant dollars
 - Partnering to share resources
 - Bringing in a larger network



It Can Be Done!

- Twin Cities Zambia Disability Connection
 - Building networks locally for children with disabilities
 - Empowering families to work in their parish communities
 - Using special education teachers as a vehicle of change



It Can be Done!

- Ramsey County Employment First Summit
- MN APSE and Employment First

Interested in More?

- Community Organizing Toolkit Game
 - <http://organizinggame.org/>
- Community Organizing Workbook
 - http://www.inrc.org/Assets/docs/workbook/2_organizing.pdf
- COMM-ORG
 - <http://comm-org.wisc.edu/node/6>

Resources

- University of Minnesota, School of Social Work
- Marin Institute
- Sludge Safety Project
- Greenhill Group
- Midwest Academy

Group Questions:

- Who has the connections- Who is in your network
- What currently exists in the community
- Rules for Radicals, Sal Alinsky
- What are your next steps