

FUNDAMENTALS OF COMMUNITY ORGANISING

Training Program – Participant's Guide



INTRODUCTION

The Wilderness Society started as a small group of nature-lovers standing up for our wild places, and through the iconic Franklin River campaign enlivened a movement and inspired a generation. Our many successes over the last 40 years have shown that the best way to protect nature for future generations is to demonstrate visible public support for not only the protection of nature, but the global climate in Australia.

We will return to our people power roots. We will re-invigorate our greatest strength: our ability to inspire and empower people to make change.

Community organising is the primary source of our power. It will help us win campaigns, but it is more than this. It involves empowering,

training and supporting leaders to activate their community, build effective teams and create solutions to achieve our shared vision. Our key organising target is to secure 100,000 active supporters by 2020. Conversation by conversation, we will build our power to instill lasting change for nature.

The foundation of much of the community organising strategy is our training program. It will be a major drawcard for aspiring volunteer organisers and will expand our impact on the movement by training a new generation of environmental leaders.

Our training program will work to develop leaders across the country; this will, of course, help us win campaigns. But it will also build capacity and infrastructure that will allow us to keep winning into the next generation.



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Key Learnings | Participants should be able to leave the training with the following increased skills and understandings:

- Basic community organising and movement building frameworks
- Relational organising skills
- Developing and using values-based messaging and personal narrative
- Importance and experience with effective House Parties
- Building grassroots teams and volunteer culture

Length | 2 days

Approach | This will be a highly interactive training with a combination of presentation, discussion, small group work, demonstrations and exercises.

Participants Manual | Each participant will receive a manual of resources that accompany this training.

Suggested Readings

- Marshall Ganz — Importance of Story
- Dave Mann — Movement Moments
- Erik Peterson — Organizing or Mobilizing
- Erik Peterson — How Good Storytelling Can Save the Left
- Cristina Xu — Signal, Space, Structure: Designing for Communities of Interest
- Wellstone Action — Politics the Wellstone Way

Day One

Duration
30 mins

Introductions and Purpose

Welcome, introduction and review of purpose

- Welcome
- Why we are here
- Introductions: name, place, and *place* you love — and why. Pull out themes and use to talk about importance of story

1 hour

Community Organising and Movement Building Overview

An overview of the key elements of movement building based on connecting deep, relational organising and base-building with grassroots, people and issue-centred electoral campaigning around a clear, progressive public policy agenda; discuss different models and approaches to community organising and building power, with a focus on building a powerful base of people and grassroots leaders connected through dense and enduring relationships.

- **Discussion/Exercise:** Magic Clicker = “If you had this magic clicker, what would you change?” = discussion of power
- Power fills the gap between reality and dreams
- Hope + Vision + Commitment + Power = Changed Reality
- Core Elements — Triangle
- Building Power — Community Base; Structural Change; Narrative Shift (Venn Diagram)
- Building Strategic Capacity
- Putting campaigning and movement building together — models for organising

15 mins

BREAK

45 mins

The Wilderness Society National Movement Building Plan

An overview of our national organising plan grounded in a community organising approach, including key geographies and the importance of data and its integration in our organising campaigns.

30 mins

Geographical Targeting and Data Driven Organising

- Overview of targeted regions and rationale
- Importance of data, and how data will help focus and drive strategic decisions

45 mins

LUNCH

1 hour 45 mins

Relational Organising Practises

One-to-one relational organising is the spine of all community organising, and this focus on building authentic public relationships and identifying issues, interests, and values to move people is different from more transactional, short-term electoral campaigning or issue mobilisation.

- Difference between organising and mobilising
- Overview two approaches: 1:1 — Issues, Interest, Values, Capacity and Commitment (Lil Guy) and House Parties
- What these approaches are, when they are used and for what purposes
- Demo first part of house party that draws on story

15 mins

BREAK

2 hours**Building Grassroots Volunteer Field Teams**

Community organising is scalable through geographically based teams of volunteers who are aligned around common ends, but relatively self-directing and autonomous in defining actions. This requires ongoing leadership identification, development and training. Building and supporting these volunteer teams is the bulk of an organiser's work.

- Three types of leadership: command and control; spoke and wheel; dense relationships (distributed)
- Distributed leadership models — skit
- Presentation of basic components of field team program — building geographically based volunteer teams
- Roles, purpose, organising them, challenges
- Building a volunteer culture — practical exploration of what makes for a good experience vs. a poor experience

Day Two**1 hour 30 mins****Values Based Messaging**

Messaging is how we communicate our core values in a way that connects deeply and moves people to take action.

- Difference between messaging and narrative
- Personal narrative — use of story
- Audience
- Making messages sticky
- Three tools: (1) message box; (2) message triangle; (3) 4 Ps – telling a public policy story
- Some brief exercises

15 mins**BREAK****1 hour 15 mins****Making an Effective Ask**

Effective, scalable mobilisation is built upon connecting our campaign with what matters to people and then providing actions they can take to help address our shared problem.

- Presentation — model and best practices for making an effective ask
- Exercise: Doorknocking campaign for a local issue (exercise can be modified easily for local campaigns)

45 mins**LUNCH****45 mins****Choosing an Issue and Making a Plan**

Campaigns too often start with tactics — signing a petition, going to a rally, putting up a sign, or doing direct action at a site — without defining a strategy to win a set of demands, and in doing so they ultimately become campaigns in search of a strategy, and too often in search of a win.

- Introduction to VAST Planning and how to cut an issue

1 hour**Grassroots Campaign Tactics**

Community organising builds the capacity to create change. When our supporters are mobilised to action we must utilise evidence-based campaign tactics that win support in the community and move our agenda. This session examines a variety of grassroots campaign tactics and their relative effectiveness.

30 mins**Conclusion and evaluation**



The Wilderness Society Inc.

GPO Box 716, Hobart Tasmania 7001, Australia

TELEPHONE: (03) 6270 1701

FACSIMILE: (03) 6231 6533

EMAIL: info@wilderness.org.au

ABN 62 007 508 349

wilderness.org.au

COVER IMAGE: Laura Bay, Great Australian Bight | Bill Doyle