

If you give me a fish, you have fed me for a day. If you teach me to fish, then you have fed me until the river is contaminated or the shoreline seized for development. But if you teach me how to organize, then whatever the challenge I can join together with my peers and we will fashion our own solution.- Ricardo Levins Morales

Everyday that we choose to organize and to struggle, we are already creating the world that we seek.

I--> We

Power With vs. Power Over

We believe that the most effective means of change is people engaging in collective struggle to place direct demands upon those who hold power - VWC Strategic Orientation

Drawing of an iceberg w/ labels

“Power grows from organization... Freedom is never given. It must be taken. And therefore, we only get what we are organized to take.”

- National Union of the Homeless
(together with the next one)

“Power only respects power... Power never steps back, except in the face of more power.” -
Malcom X

“Power, properly understood, is the ability to achieve purpose. It is the strength required to bring about social, political, or economic changes. In this sense power is not only desirable but necessary in order to implement the demands of love and justice. One of the greatest problems of history is that the concepts of love and power are usually contrasted as polar opposites...[w]hat is needed is a realization that power without love is reckless and abusive and love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice. Justice at its best is love correcting everything that stands against love.”
p. 14 MLK in “A New Kind of Power” by MLK in The Progressive 6/1/1967 pp-13-18 Available at: <http://www.thekingcenter.org/archive/document/new-kind-power#>

“You’ve got to talk as you walk. You’ve got to teach as you fight. You’ve got to learn as you lead. These things are inseparable to the problem of organizing...” -Willie Baptist (Poverty Initiative)

“We can never forget that base-building is the most central aspect of organizing and social change generally. We need to build our bases in a really serious and systematic way and make sure that we’re trying to reach more and more people all the time.” - Ai-Jen Poo (National Domestic

Workers Alliance)

“It’s important for organizers to assume the best in people. We shouldn’t be naïve, but we should assume that people generally want to do what’s right: they want to be good people; they want to be good neighbors; they want to do unto others as they would have done unto them. That desire to be good and right is an untapped reserve of energy that organizers can draw on if we are open to it, if we look for the good in people and try to find ways to bring out that goodness. We need to organize with love, and that will allow us to build an infinitely stronger force.” - Ai-Jen Poo (National Domestic Workers Alliance)

Chart to contrast Organizing with Advocacy, Electoral, Direct Service, Project or Activity

And if we have to march, that’s important that we march. It is important that we protest. But we also have to organize because the only way that we can change is through organizing. - Dolores Huerta

“Those who profess to favor freedom and yet depreciate agitation, are people who want crops without ploughing the ground; they want rain without thunder and lightning; they want the ocean without the roar of its many waters.”
- Frederick Douglass

The organizer becomes part of the community, learning from it, becoming aware of its strengths, resources, concerns, and ways of doing business. The organizer does not have a complete answer in advance – the researcher’s detailed comprehensive plans for remedying a perceived problem. The organizer wants to construct a solution with the community.
- Bob Moses

“Organizers interweave relationships, understanding, and action so that each contributes to each other.”
-Marshall Ganz (United Farm Workers)

“If you want to build a ship, don’t drum up people to collect wood and don’t assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea.” — Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*

“Many people believe that what successful organizers have is good answers. That’s wrong. What we have is great questions. We’re not in a community to *tell* people what to do, but to *ask* them. One of the greatest skills an organizer can have is the ability to frame and ask questions in ways that make people not only want to answer them, but also to think deeply, and in unexpected ways, about what the answers might be. This is how some of the best strategic research takes place, and how some of the most effective strategies and tactics are developed.” - Si Kahn

“Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat.” — Sun Tzu

"But mass nonviolent demonstrations will not be enough. They must be supplemented by a continuing job of organization. To produce change, people must be organized to work together in units of power." p. 131 MLK Where do we go from here?