

Building alliances, community engagement and using community organising

Introduction from Dave Prentis

I am delighted to introduce this advice on building community alliances and using community organising to fight the public service cuts.

Community organising is about building relationships with people in our communities to strengthen our ability to bring about change. Community campaigning will let us share our members' interests with others, so they become issues that are important to the wider community.

This guidance recognises the great work happening in branches and regions and to inspire others to engage in this area. It is hoped that this guide will introduce the ideas of community organising, building alliances and community engagement to you as well as give you helpful tips and practical ways that you can build these elements into your UNISON campaigns.

The crisis

We now know the details of the expenditure cuts and public sector reforms the Coalition intends to make over the next four years. Cameron and Clegg have made no secret of their aim to use the economic crisis to make an historic shift in shrinking the size of the state. It means that public services, which we have taken for granted for decades and which contribute to the quality of life for everybody, are likely to end, become means tested or be sold to the private sector.

The cuts and reforms will have devastating effect on communities. Cutting public spending means job losses and redundancies in the public and private sectors. It will hurt families and neighborhoods and all those who rely on public services, as well as having a knock-on effect on the local and national economy. To challenge the Coalition's agenda at a local level, UNISON needs to work with as wide a range of friends and allies as we can.

Our response

This crisis gives us a chance to develop new, creative tactics to bring pressure to bear on decision makers at all levels. By building links with a wide range of community allies, we can counteract the divisions that keep people from acting together. An understanding of the implications of the cuts is necessary, together with the development of alternative proposals that allow service users and communities access to policy decisions at local level. This is our opportunity to reclaim democracy and provide practical alternatives.

A key element of this work will be the way that we frame our campaigns so that they resonate not just with activists or trade unionists but also the general public. With regards to the public sector cuts and reforms, where at the moment most of the public regard them as necessary, advocating an alternative 'better way' will be essential. UNISON needs to reframe the argument that is being portrayed about the cuts and reforms being essential and portray that our alternative version is more than the protection of our vested interests. We need to speak in a language that resonates with the general public and what matters to them rather than a language that resonates with us as trade unionists.

How do you make contact with other groups in the community that might share our concerns? There are specific steps you can take. The key is to start by tapping into the wealth of community connections, skills and leadership potential in your own membership.

The steps outlined in this guide provide a set of tools that you can use. How much or how little you do will depend on the nature of the branch and the circumstances of your campaign. Even if you only carry out an activity or two, you will have helped to build your branch's links in the community and strengthened your ability to campaign.

Steps: Work with other branches in your area

Members across all Service Groups are also local residents and will be affected by local cuts and public service reforms. Bringing together branches in different service groups to tackle local issues will make you stronger. Branches can inform and support each other, and make the best use of contacts between UNISON and other organisations.

Because this type of working is new to most of UNISON, a lead from the region is crucial to making it work. Some groups of branches have good community contacts and may just need some initial regional coordination, and perhaps a regional pool bid or a little AO / LO support to help them get started. In other cases, community organising will be completely new and full time AO / LO support to help build a community alliance may be needed. Regions also have an important role to play by smoothing potential tensions between branches; and in clarifying what are genuinely cross-branch issues.

Case Study: The Real Oxford Union

Branches across Health, Local Government, Higher Education and Police Staff have come together to form the Real Oxford Union. Oxford branches are aware that their local economy is as much at risk as many in the North, with over 42% of jobs dependent on the public purse.

Over the next 18 months the Real Oxford Union will encourage closer working between the activists, branches and regional staff. The overall aims of the project are to increase:

- the number of trained and active stewards

- overall membership numbers
- membership density in all key workplaces
- UNISON's public, political & news media profile
- co-operative working between branches in supporting members, including joint meetings of branch executives

Working with UNISON's Hidden Workforce project, the branches have begun to map contracted out workers that could be organised and done training on using new media. The group plans to hold a meeting with key community organisations in Oxford to build their campaign.

Broadening out the coalition – working with trades councils, regional TUCs and public service users

There are many different ways that branches can work in partnership with community organisations and groups and each way of working has both pros and cons. It is up to each branch to consider its resources and where it is at before undertaking in one of the models of working. There is no silver bullet to working with community groups and working with community groups is not a new idea or something new to UNISON as there have been pockets of good practice throughout the union. The ways of working will depend on such things as resources, time, money as well as how organised the branch is.

Groups of UNISON branches may want to join forces with others unions in their area through a trades council or Regional TUC, as well as building links with community and professional organisations and service users who share our concerns. Sit down with your campaign group to map out the organisations you want to contact. Which ones would be particularly interested in a specific issue you are dealing with? Which ones would have the power to influence decision makers? (see Power Analysis in the resources section of this guide.

As part of our campaigning and organising work we need to win over the public and engage with them around the cuts and reform agenda. This could be done through a number of methods including street stalls, having a stand at local events and handing out leaflets (please refer to UNISON's Effective Campaigning guide for more information <http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/19308.pdf>).

Different models of working with community groups

As part of our organising strategy we have an opportunity to establish coalitions and campaigns against the cuts and reforms. Sometimes that may involve using or revitalising structures and partnerships that already exist, like local trades councils and civic groups like London Citizens; in other cases it may mean the establishment of new structures and partnerships. In some cases a single issue campaign is established and in other a broader multi issue campaign is established. Both have pros and cons and branches need to consider these.

In all cases we have to build partnerships with community organisations not as add-ons but as central to the wider campaign. This crisis also gives us the opportunity to develop new, creative tactics to bring pressure to bear on decision makers at all levels.

Types of groups that branches can work with

- Parent Teacher Associations
- Resident associations
- Trade Union Councils
- Other UNISON branches
- Other trade union branches
- Religious groups
- Youth groups
- Local voluntary organizations
- Local political groups such as Labour
- Service user groups
- Students' Unions
- Civic groups such as London Citizens
- Sport clubs
- Professional groups
- Anti- cuts/ reform groups

Checklist of how to consider groups/ allies to work with

Branches will need to consider is which groups and allies should they work with. Traditionally UNISON has worked with a number of allies but in the current crisis it might be time to go beyond our traditional allies and work with organisations that we have not worked with before. A mistake made in many campaigns is that time, effort and time is put into developing alliances before any discussion about who has the power and who can help us win are had.

Here is a checklist to help you consider what groups to work with:

- Does this group have power and influence?
- How will working with this group aid the campaign?
- Does this group connect with the core values of the campaign?
- What are the common areas of interest?
- Who can you trust to share your plans with?
- What resources do these organisations have?
- Has UNISON got a relationship with this organisation or have you worked with them before?
- Who is the best person to approach these allies or organisation?
- Do any of your members have any links with these allies or organisations?

Anti cut and reforms groups

There are a number of anti cuts and reforms groups setting up around the country and it is good for branches to work with them. Branches should ensure they follow "Democracy in UNISON" guidelines <http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/13305.pdf> Where an anti cuts group

is local e.g. initiated by a trades council support can be given as long as it meets the following:

- It is run on an accountable and transparent basis (i.e. it must have a constitution, have elected officers and the group must have formal minutes of meetings kept and available for inspection)
- It acts consistently with UNISON aims and objectives including independence of any political party – the group must not be a “front” for any political party and any of the group’s resources must not be used to support any political party either directly or indirectly.

If the group meets the above then UNISON branch resources can be resources committed to it, as per the Democracy in UNISON guidelines, as long as:

- Any decision to commit UNISON branch resources is made by the branch committee and minuted
- The UNISON branch has satisfied itself that group meets the criteria above.

If you are in doubt about the groups that you want to work with please ask your Regional Organiser.

Case study: Northern Public Service Alliance

In the Northern region of England local PSA coalitions have been launched in North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Sunderland, Durham, Teeside, Newcastle, Gateshead, Northumberland, and Cumbria. Made up of 15 unions working with the Northern TUC, the Northern PSA is committed to engage with public sector workers, service users, community/voluntary sector organisations to build a massive campaign against the Government's austerity measures which will impact on the most vulnerable in society. The coalition Government's policies for public spending, welfare benefits and education have major implications for families and communities. The Northern PSA aims to bring together trade unions, community groups, voluntary and faith groups and that dependant on public services to discuss how to respond to these threats, to protect our communities, and defend public services.

Steps: Talk to your members

One of the greatest resources you have is the people that make up your own branch – even those that don't think of themselves as 'activists'. Many of your members will be affected by the cuts in ways that make them more willing to get involved in a campaign. They may also have connections to community organisations that could be potential allies. But you won't know any of this unless you ask them!

Community organising uses tool called a 'listening campaign' to find out more about their member's lives. This is really just a structured conversation with a small group of people, asking a couple of simple questions and listening to what people have to say.

Questions might include: What impact will pay freezes and job losses have on their income and their ability to make ends meet? What will they have to give up? What are the implications for their family, health, children's education, community participation? What will the loss of specific services mean to them? What about cuts in benefits? Where do they spend their money now and how will this change?

Answers to these questions will give you an idea of where you could build links around common concerns – with groups and individuals interested in health, education, housing, crime and the state of civil society and the local economy. A local GP may not be interested in supporting a public service worker whose pay has been frozen, but they may be concerned about a patient who can no longer afford her family's prescriptions. Doing this has the added benefit of building relationships between people as well as links between union and community members. It should also help you to strengthen the organisation in your branch.

Think about practical ways this can be organised within the branch – for example, holding small group meetings with stewards, who can then do the same with their members.

Encourage members to speak to contacts linked to their experience of the cuts, such as staff at their children's school, their GP practice or their local housing association. Use the process to recruit new members who might be fellow parents, patients or tenants.

If there are pressing issues facing the branch, such as redundancies, you could begin the process there by 'listening' to those affected by the job cuts and making contact with the community organisations they belong to – faith organisations in particular will care about the welfare of their congregants. But you could also find common ground with the schools they send their children to, the GP practices they attend, the Housing Associations they are tenants of, the small businesses where they spend their money, etc. The point is to build relationships with community organisations which share common concerns with UNISON members.

Tools: Listening campaign

A Listening Campaign is a way of building relationships and identifying concerns and priorities in a specific neighborhood, workplace or organisation. It is accomplished through "one-on-one" or small group meetings facilitated by leaders. These meetings can range from 15 minute to one hour face-to-face conversations in which people share their own stories with each other.

A more detailed guide to running a listening campaign can be found in the resources section of this guide.

Case study: North Lanarkshire

Lanarkshire Economic and Social Justice Forum is a local coalition being established in North Lanarkshire. Spearheaded by UNISON, the STUC and elements in the Catholic Church, the group aims to build a citizens group that can tackle local issues around poverty and social justice.

The group will be holding a forum to bring faith groups, trade unions, civil society organisations together to discuss the issues of social injustice within Lanarkshire. They are asking, “what would a socially just Lanarkshire look like, and how can we bring about the change that will make that socially just Lanarkshire a reality? “ The forum will look at the next steps for building a socially just Lanarkshire. Organisers say, “We intend to ask individuals to write about their experiences, ideas and hopes for the Forum. We shall then use these testimonies to produce a pamphlet which will be distributed to those attending the Forum and to our wider community.”

Steps: Map your members’ affiliations – UNISON members may also be active in many other organisations - members of voluntary organisations, school governors or councillors, They may play or coach sport, be part of religious organisations, members of residents’ associations have children at local schools or play an active part in other community groups.

Try to identify the areas where large numbers of the workers live. Which are the faith organisations they belong to? How are their national or ethnic community organised? What media or communication outlets (newspapers, radios) have influence in the community?

By mapping these elements of our membership we will be able to build connections to other community organisations. Even if we don’t agree on everything, we should be able to find common issues that we can work on together.

Use your mapping to build relationships with potential allies. Instead of cold-calling a list of community organisations asking for their support, encourage members with links to those organisations to make direct contact. Make these one-to-one meetings, not emails or letters or leaflets. Try to find out how their organisation will be affected by cuts/freezes. It is important not just to sell them our agenda but to find out about their issues and concerns and then to try and find some common ground. The point is to build relationships that will be sustainable in the long term, not just sign people up to our campaign.

Forms for recording the information you collect are included in the resources section of this guide.

Tools: One to ones

One-on-ones are the mainstay of community organising. They establish a relationship that can yield benefits in the long term. The main goal of a one-on-one meeting is to get to know someone, not to sell them on UNISON’s position. A secondary outcome of a one-on-one meeting is that it could encourage a non-member to join the union.

Within community organising one to ones will operate at different levels with different people e.g.

- Members
- Activists
- Non members
- General public
- Local community
- Leaders of other organisations

A one-to-one meeting is an alternative to all the other short-cuts that we often try to take - newsletters, fliers, videos, e-mail, committee meetings, bulletin announcements, the right slogan or banner or logo, ideology, telephone calls, and on and on - to connect with other people. You can "make contact" using these other methods, but you cannot build relationships with people without investing the time and effort to speak to them face to face.

A one-on-one is a personal conversation with a contact to learn about his/her concerns, level of interest and commitment to an issue, and the resources the person has to offer. One-on-ones should take place in a quiet setting and last 30 minutes to an hour, during which time the people involved should develop a level of trust with one another. The person you are meeting should do most of the talking in a one-on-one, while you ask questions to clarify points and learn more detail.

A one-on-one is an active discussion and exchange. You are not just gathering information, data, or statistics to put into a report. The one-on-one is the basis for developing a relationship between you and your contact. And don't be afraid to share some of your own story too. That's part of building a public relationship.

Finally it is very important to document your one-on-ones, but do not do this during the meeting. Your notes will enable you identify potential leaders and create mailing and phone lists, so you can contact people in the future.

A more detailed guide to carrying out one-to-one meetings is included in the resources section of this guide.

Steps: Bring together a working group to carry out your campaign

Bring together a working group or coalition to review your one-on-ones and invite people to join your community action team (or committee, task force, campaign group). Ideally, teams should have up to 10 to 20 active members so they are big enough to have representation

from the wide range of groups. Try to build an action team of core leaders who have time, energy, passion for the issue, possess a "can-do" attitude and represent a diverse cross-section from many sectors of the community.

- (1) identify the most significant problems that people are facing
- (2) identify one small, achievable change that would make a real difference to them
- (3) plan a campaign to tackle that issue
- (4) carry out a power analysis to develop your strategy

More details on how to plan your campaign can be found in UNISON's Effective campaigning guide <http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/19308.pdf>

Case study: Dudley Coalition Against the Cuts

Pete Lowe, a UNISON officer and Managers in Partnership National Officer, is a local Labour Party Councillor and lead member for finance at Dudley Council (Tory Controlled). Via the Trades Council in Dudley he talked to various community groups about the issues facing the community and it was decided to call. In addition to the Trade Union movement attending, the group received great support from local voluntary groups and local faith groups. Around 60 people attended from over 20 groups or societies.

Following this a steering group has been established of around 20 people and activity has been established about defending a local you group including a potential rally and potential demonstration at council tax setting. For organising staff involved it is hugely encouraging to see many groups uniting to defend their communities including many young people who up until now had little knowledge or insight into the important role Trade Unions can play to co-ordinate campaigns and encourage activity.

Tools: Power Analysis

Power is a central concept in community organising. For any given solution to a problem, we must analyse who has the power to give us what we are seeking. Also to make the most of our capacity, experience and size we need to be able to analyse our own power in relation to our ability to win a given goal. Do we have the power to stop the closure of a library or do we only have this power when we work with other key community groups? Do those who are making the decisions feel that we have the power to change things? The community organiser Saul Alinsky said the following, *'power is not only what you have but what the enemy thinks you have.'* We need to conduct a power analysis to develop a strategy for winning a specific objective. We need to be very clear about identifying a campaign "target", i.e., the person or people with the power to give us what we are seeking. When the target is someone who we find difficult to influence directly, further analysis can help identify "secondary targets" who we can influence and who also has influence over the primary target.

We also need to make the most of our resources and take the time to conduct an honest assessment of our power in relation to our desired goals. For example, it makes little sense start a campaign against cuts without the ability to mobilise large numbers of people with a wide base (or at least strong allies in other communities), and sufficient resources to make the campaign a real priority.

It is best to choose a campaign that is achievable, even if it does not solve all of the problems you are facing. Small wins build confidence and the skills of those involved. That then allows you to move on to more challenging issues. It is also wise to choose objectives that require the union to bolster our power to win, increasing the likelihood that we will build our membership and become more powerful through the campaign.

Forms to help you carry out a power analysis are included in the resources section of this guide.

Steps: Organise a community meeting

Once the groundwork has been done for the campaign it is time to call a face-to-face meeting with fellow activists. Be strategic about who you invite, and keep first meetings to a small manageable number so you can make decisions and get things done.

Call everyone you plan to invite and invite them personally, and tell them why it is important that they be part of this campaign. For example, "It is really important that we have the parent voice as part of our campaign— we would love to have your perspective on our work."

Having a meeting isn't the goal, but a step toward creating a plan of action to make the campaign a success. Before the meeting, set an agenda detailing the subjects you will cover, and approximately how much time you will spend on each item. This will help keep the meeting from wandering. Pass out a written agenda or write one large enough for all meeting attendee to see, so that everyone is aware of the direction of the meeting. As the meeting convener, you should start by thanking everyone for coming, introducing yourself and giving a brief background on why you are interested in this issue, then have the others do the same. Ask the group to select the issue(s) they want to discuss, and then get the team members to prioritise the problem(s)/issue(s) to work on. Don't overwhelm people, but share knowledge with them. It is also helpful to pass out materials/brochures that you found useful.

Steps: Take creative action to move the campaign forward

Chances are, you will not get what you want without building public pressure on decision makers. That will involve taking well planned, careful and creative action.

Too often we take action just to be seen doing something, without having a clear idea what we are aiming for. Remember that **the point of action is to get a reaction**, so always be clear what it is you want to accomplish.

Well planned actions should have three elements. It should be:

- Polarizing – action should convey a simple, dramatic message. People are unlikely to support actions aimed at achieving something vague or overly complicated.
- Personalised – your action should target the person with the power to deliver the result you want.
- Within your experience and outside of theirs – Action should be fun, innovative and creative - something that will grab the attention of the media and the public. Make use of the activities that you are comfortable with to make the targets uncomfortable. For example, at a living wage protest at the Tate Modern in December 2007, campaigners used their experience singing in church choirs to hold a carol concert outside the Tate and to do a highly visual action inside. They were comfortable with singing – the management of the Tate was not accustomed to being sung to!

When members of South London Citizens discovered that cleaning and catering workers at Tate Modern were not being paid the London living wage, they initiated a campaign to get the museum to change its policy. Frustrated by the failure of repeated attempts to meet with Tate management, the action team decided to hold a high profile, symbolic event that would get the public's interest.

A week before Christmas 2007, church choirs joined London Citizens groups in a carol concert outside the Tate. Meanwhile, around 200 activists milled about the Turbine Hall. At a signal, they lined up along the 167-metre crack in the floor that was Doris Salcedo's *Shibboleth* 2007, an installation meant to stand for the world's long legacy of racism and colonialism. Joining hands over the crack, the demonstrators highlighted the Tate's hypocrisy in addressing social divisions through art while perpetuating them through the pay of its own workers. The following day Tate management offered London Citizens a meeting and a promise to review their pay rates. [include picture?]

Step: Use the campaign to identify and develop leaders, gain skills and build relationships between diverse sectors of the community

In community organising, leadership development is a central concern and a key outcome in addition to policy change objectives. As members participate in social change work, build skills, and take on responsibilities, they become "leaders" within the organising group. Developing these leaders and building the "base" of leaders and other community members

is an ongoing focus of community organising. These leaders then are able to reach out into the different areas of the community and start to bring about change.

Step: Train your members

Training is key to building alliances and community organising. While a written guide like this one will help to introduce these techniques, they become much more alive in training. Key community organising training is an opportunity to develop and test out the one to ones and how you make approaches to community groups. If your branch is interested in accessing training in community organising techniques, please contact...

Appendixes:

Trade union councils

Trades union councils (or more commonly 'trades council') are still an important element of the overall union movement and are a great example of an alliance between trade unions. There are currently 129 councils registered with the TUC and over half the current registered trades union councils report that they are active in their communities or are working with local affiliated union branches.

What is community organising?

Community organising brings together community organisations, faith institutions and trade unions into permanent relationships to campaign for social justice. It helps to bring out many voices to add collective power and strength to an issue. Relationships lie at the heart of organising, and the "one-to-one" relational conversation between an organiser and a community member is the building block of organising. Community organising is a long-term approach as the process of growing and mobilizing a base, building power, shifting attitudes, and changing policies or practices does not happen overnight. It is where the people affected by an issue are supported in identifying problems and taking action to achieve solutions. Success for community organisers encompasses leadership development and positive shifts in power dynamics as well as desired policy change.

Originally an American idea (Barack Obama started his career as a citizens' organiser) it has spread worldwide to Germany, Canada and Australia. The aim is to build grassroots power in local communities by training and developing leaders and helping them to build relationships both with their own members and with other organisations within the community. Community organising changes the balance of power and creates new power bases. At the heart of community organising are inclusion, ownership, relationship building and leadership development. For UNISON branches, this means training that supplements and deepens our own workplace organising training, and relationships that will help influence employers through joint campaigning.

Community organising is:-

- Working with other community groups to find common areas to campaign on.
- Working with allies that we might not have felt comfortable working with before.
- Organising for a movement of change in the long term.
- Forming relationships with groups within the community both in the short term and the long term and the relationship being a two way process.
- Listening to what the community says, responding to it and ensuring that these personal stories appear in our campaigning work.
- Learning what community members' concerns are, and find out what they identify as problems.
- Allowing other groups to take a lead.
- Member to member relations

- Long term and sustainable
- The Iron Rule of organising is, "Never do for people what they can do for themselves."

Community organising is not:-

- Not telling the community what the problem is.
- Opposing our views on other community groups.
- A short term solution
- The union wanting to lead all the time.
- A solution to all our issues- it is another tool in our organising toolbox.
- Community groups just being asked to support our policy.
- Leader – to – leader relationships

Appendix 2: Resources

Mapping community allies

Name		Contact details

Impact of cuts	Affiliations		Action
	Organisation	Position/role	Willing to do:

Impact of cuts	Affiliations		Action

Mapping community allies

Name	Contact details	Impact of cuts	Affiliations	Action

Name	Contact details	Impact of cuts	Affiliations	Action

CARRYING OUT A POWER ANALYSIS

Doing a power analysis is about getting specific – naming names, doing your homework to find out about your own members and activists and the organizations, employers, politicians and journalists that could help or hinder your campaign.

Internally, you want to know:

- Who are the members you want to involve in the campaign? How much do you know about them?
- How can you strengthen relationships within the branch/organisation?
- What relationships do your members have with allies in the community?
- How strong are those relationships?
- How can we build on the ones we have and develop new ones?

In terms of external actors, think about:

- Who could be helpful
- Who could be a barrier?
- Who do we need to win over?
- Who do we need to neutralize?
- What are the interests of those who have the power to give you what you want, and what you need to do for them to get them onside?

The template below will help you to work through a power analysis. The criteria listed just examples. Feel free to add others and adapt them to your own campaign.

What are the union's strengths and weaknesses in terms of winning this campaign? What are the threats to our success? What opportunities could we take advantage of? List them below.

Criteria	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities
Level of organisation?			
Resources, assets, people?			
Experience, skills?			
Knowledge, data?			
Contacts, community engagement			
Public awareness and support?			
Media coverage?			
Economic impact?			
Political context?			

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Relational One to one conversations:

Relational one to one conversations are the mainstay in community organising. They are the most powerful tool in the repertoire of community organisers and institutional leaders alike.

They are the means to build and maintain relationships. They are a way into networks. They establish a relationship in times of calm that can yield benefits in times of crisis. They are a tool to be used in any 'listening exercise' consultation process' - and they may be the most significant distinction in the way we generate our people's agenda for the mayoral campaign.

- A meeting with the purpose of initiating or maintaining a public relationship.
- Polite, but not to excess.
- No certain agenda; though you can certainly have definite goals that you wish to achieve through the relationship - and even within the space of one conversation.
- If there is an agenda, it is the other person's self-interest - to discover what it is that produces strong emotional reactions in them, and to probe for the reasons.
- Not a note-taking exercise - though it is often useful to jot things down afterwards. A net-working exercise - writing down contact names and numbers is good.
- Establishing one's credentials is important, though these will vary widely: "I am speaking to all new families in the parish"; "We run a campaign on low pay"; "My school is doing some research on..." The credentials will help to allay the instinctive suspicions of people who feel the probing interest of someone they don't know so well.

Four key components for a successful one-to-one:

1. It should be a reciprocal conversation.
2. It should be a probing - and not a prying - conversation, with the emphasis on asking 'why' more than 'what'.
3. It should be focussed on the motivation and self-interest of the individuals involved - what makes them angry/ happy/ sad/ excited.
4. Tension and agitation should not be sacrificed purely on the grounds of politeness: relationship is important, but it has to be on a deeper level than the purely social, than restrained etiquette.

Focus. The "agenda " of the individual meeting is the other person - their stories about their family, their work, their community, their affiliations, their hobbies and interests. The key question is not the 'what' question, but the 'why' question. Why is something important? Why are they interested in this or that? Why do they value something? Why do they act on something and not on others?

Direction. You are searching for the often personal grounding for other people's public action. You're looking for depth. To find depth in others you have to avoid generalities, chit-chat, ideology, selling, whining, projecting, an obsession with tasks.

Probing vs. Prying. There is a difference between probing (exploring for some specific thing, focused, surgical) and prying (looking for everything and nothing, unfocused, ripping off the lid of someone). This is where the tension between public and private comes into play. If you probe for the personal grounding of public action, people will understand the tension and distinction.

Who do you do individual meetings with?

- Followers
- Peer leaders
- Potential allies
- People with more power
- Talent (people with potential to lead)

Shape of an individual meeting:

- Opening - Name, credential (key, all important), context (getting to know people in the area), maybe something about yourself
- Middle - Them (who they are, why they do what they do, depth on a few things, not necessary to cover everything)
- End - Questions of me; references (other people to meet with; gives some sense of their network)
- Evaluation and notes. Not in the meeting. Afterward, in the car or on the subway. Key stories, impressions, details.

Remember that every individual meeting does not need to be emotionally profound or traumatic. Do not get the impression that the only good individual meeting is one where someone bares his soul. Be careful. This gets people nervous about the public-private tension - communicating to them that more personal matters are always more important. It also doesn't give people a sense that there are in different kinds excellent individual meetings. These sessions go best when you have a variety of top flight individual meeting

Case Studies

Yorkshire and Humberside branch seminar on the white paper

Resources

What is a listening campaign?

A Listening Campaign is a focused effort to build community and identify concerns and priorities in a specific neighborhood/workplace or organisation. It is accomplished through "one-on-one" or small group meetings facilitated by leaders. These meetings - also called "relational" meetings - are 45 minute to one hour face-to-face conversations in which people share their own stories with each other, helping them better understand their ideas and concerns.

The outcome is a new relationship in which a group of people feel linked to each other and have identified common experiences and concerns. A Listening Campaign intends to identify the issues for members of the group, strengthen the connections between participants and find and develop new leaders. Listening Campaigns often lead to the development of initiatives/campaigns/programmes that arise out of the common concerns.

A Listening Campaign can also help a group more clearly shape its vision and find out where it is now and where it is going in the future.

How to organise a listening campaign

1. Identify the questions you want to ask. This will depend on the point of the campaign. The general aim is to get people to talk about how they experience life in their community, to identify the issues that they care about and to suggest concerns that they would like the organization/local authority to address as part of its public agenda.

Example of questions:

- What is the most significant thing happening in the lives of you and your family?
 - What are your concerns about living and working in your community?
 - What would you most like to see changed?
 - What do you think the council should be prioritizing?
2. Identify small groups of 5-10 people who could be asked to meet for one hour, either in the workplace, public space (pub, café, community centre) or someone's home. This could be done by department, by street or by organizational affiliation.
 3. Trained 'listeners' should lead the discussion, ensuring that everyone introduces themselves ('do rounds') and that the key questions are answered. But bear in mind, this is a conversation, not a survey. The point is simply to encourage people to talk, not to grill them.
 4. A recorder should take notes. There are model forms in this toolkit that can be used to record participants' views.

5. Results of the listening campaign should be collated and key conclusions produced. Where possible it would be good to take these conclusions back to a larger meeting of the group for comment and ratification. In some cases you will want the group to vote on their priorities from amongst the issues identified.

Resources

The forms below can be adapted for use in collecting and collating results of the listening campaign.

Form for recording one-to-one or group interviews:

[illegible]

Form for recording results of one-to-one or group interviews

Leader name:	Date:
Community/organisation/workplace:	Subgroup:
Interviewee(s):	
Contact information (if relevant):	

Key issues (in order of importance):	A key campaign issue?
1.	Y / N / Don't know
2.	Y / N / Don't know
3.	Y / N / Don't know
4.	Y / N / Don't know
5.	Y / N / Don't know
6.	Y / N / Don't know

Any direct quotes:

Interviewer's reflections

Did you feel moved by the stories you were told? Should the politicians or decision makers hear them directly?

Did you think this person/group would act on these issues?

How much difference do you think action on the top priority would make to the person's life?

[illegible]

