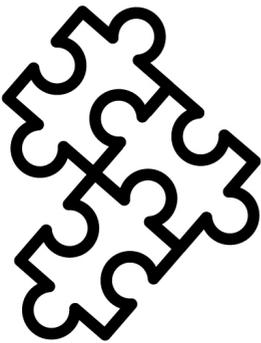


**Seeds for
Change**
In-depth guide



Facilitating campaign strategy planning

**A guide to going through the process of planning your
campaign strategy in a grassroots group**

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Introduction

A campaign strategy is a plan for how you will give yourselves the best chance of success.

This guide aims to support groups to go through the process of planning your campaign together. We help you to do it in a way that works for as many people as possible and results in solid decisions you can all put your weight behind.

Working together on important decisions helps your group put into practice values like equality and co-operation. Collective decision making also increases the chances people feel involved and follow through on decisions you've made. This is vital in a voluntary group, where people are likely to vote with their feet and leave if they feel frustrated.

However, we aren't brought up with the skills to make complex and important decisions in groups. Simply trying to do it is no guarantee that the experience will be empowering and effective!

The guide may be particularly useful to people who plan to facilitate the meetings. However, the more people in the group engage in thinking about how to make the planning process work, the more effective it is likely to be.

Creating a plan involves...



... analysing your situation, deciding on clear goals, working out which players to target, how you can best put pressure on them and what kinds of tactics will be effective. An effective strategy also includes a plan for building up the capacity of your group and campaign, so you can increase momentum and enable enough people to be actively involved for the long haul. See our guide *Campaign Strategy* for more.

Planning as a group

Before launching into planning your strategy, it helps to think through what you are trying to achieve by working together on the plan. Group decision-making brings up challenges, which can be easier to navigate if you're clear why you're trying to make the decision together. We've listed some common benefits and pitfalls of planning as a group:

Benefits of planning in a group

Empowerment and commitment

Making important decisions together is important for people feeling fully involved and included in a campaign. It is also an essential skill to learn together if we want to build a society where people can have more power over all aspects of their lives. When everyone has been involved in shaping the plan, they are more likely to put it in practice.

Shared understanding

If everyone is clear about why you are taking a particular approach, your every day campaign meetings should go more smoothly. For example, if it is clear which suggested tactics fit your overall strategy and which don't, it should be easy to choose between them.

More perspectives

Assuming you have enough in common to work together, then the more perspectives you can take into account at the strategy planning stage the better. Meetings may feel efficient when you reach agreement easily, but any differences that exist between the people in a meeting are likely to be shared by other people in the campaign. Bringing them into the open will help you find ways forward that strengthen the whole group.

More ways of thinking

Coming up with a good strategy involves systematic research, logical analysis, insight, creativity, lateral thinking and many more brain skills. It is rare that one person can do all of those things well. Bringing lots of people to the table means we can benefit from all these ways of thinking.

Common pitfalls

Barriers to participation

Coming up with an effective strategy involves 'big picture' thinking, and bearing lots of different factors in mind in order to make a decision. That can easily lead to the conversation being very abstract, or people feeling overwhelmed because they can't hold the information in their heads.

In addition, groups can create extra barriers to participation by having a narrow idea of what they think strategy meetings should look like. For example, if we think strategising should be a purely logical process with no space for feelings or intuition, it will limit who can engage.

Make time for getting to grips with background information. Use simple visuals and summaries to help people remember. Vary your facilitation tools and methods to make space for more different ways of thinking.

Different ideas about how to go forward

Strategy meetings can bring out our different opinions and ethics about how to make change. Because a campaign plan is a big and important decision, we may find it harder to compromise than in a more routine meeting. Alternatively, you may find the conversation gets stuck because people are avoiding addressing their disagreements directly!

If you can, there are benefits to bringing the differences into the open and really exploring them. It gives you a much clearer picture of whether you can go on working together long term. Getting more shared understanding may help you come up with a plan you can all stick to.

Bringing in feelings

Not everyone finds it easy to talk about strong emotions, especially in the context of a campaign meeting! However, communication is harder when we don't acknowledge feelings. For example, if someone feels hopeless about the success of the campaign, they might not voice it out loud so as not to bring everyone else down. But it can come out in other ways. For example shooting down all the ideas that people come up with.

Making space to acknowledge feelings may bring you closer as a group. It can also help you find ways of addressing underlying issues. Maybe if someone is feeling hopeless about success it is the moment to up your game and use more confrontational tactics. Or to set more realistic goals! Or simply to allow yourselves the chance to grieve and rage about the fact that you are up against more shit than you can change.

Energy and sustainability

Logically speaking, a strategic plan is based on the actual capacity you have. You may be able to increase that capacity by getting more people involved, but remember to take into account the time that that takes too!

In practice, voluntary groups very often over-commit! This can hugely limit your effectiveness, and cause bad feeling if work (and power) aren't fairly shared out.

Not everyone finds it easy to even talk about how much capacity they have. People may feel shame about the limits to their time available. Or find it hard to accept that they don't have enough energy even though the campaign is very important to them. Being new to campaigning can make it harder to accurately estimate how long things will take.

Try to make space for assessing your capacity whenever you make a plan. Give people enough time to think honestly and realistically about what they can commit to. And always look for ways for more people to take on responsible organising roles, so it doesn't all fall on the same shoulders. Finally, be prepared to stop, re-prioritise and scale back if you need to.

Process for strategy planning

Before you start

Work out who needs to be involved: Make sure you have the right people at the table. Often that will be the people who will put the campaign plan in practice. Sometimes there will be people who are affected by the issue who don't have time for day-to-day campaigning. Consider reaching out to these people to join the strategy process if they want to, because these are the people who have most at stake!

Similarly, you might get in touch with other groups and work together on making a strategy. For example, if you have a local campaign against a coal mine, you might get together with other local groups to come up with a strategy for how to change national policy. In a situation like this, get a shared understanding of what decisions you are taking together, and what things will still be decided by local groups.

Appoint facilitators: These are people who guide the group through the decision making process. Facilitators don't have any extra power over what the decisions are - they are just there to enable everyone to be heard in a productive discussion. They could use the detailed description we have provided below to pick out appropriate questions and activities for the group.

It might take more than one meeting to decide on your strategy! You may swap round who is facilitating for different bits of the process. Whoever is doing it, it helps to think through where the group is at, and what is needed from the meeting before you start.

Step by step process: overview

This process tries to bring in different ways of thinking about strategy, so as to come up with a plan that is based on a strong analysis of the situation, and uses creative ideas to find the most effective way forward.

1. Agree your aims

What are you trying to achieve as a campaign? Everyone will have different priorities and motivations – work out what you have in common and what you can commit to working on together.

2. Gather information and analyse your context

Get a shared understanding of your situation, to help you work out how to have an influence.

3. Think creatively about ways forward

Open up space to come up with lots of possibilities for ways that you can build your campaign and have an impact on your goals.

4. Make a plan

Make a plan that will help you achieve your agreed goals. This means choosing between your creative ideas based on your analysis of the situation. Decide what organisations you will target, how you will put pressure on them, and create a timeline of potential tactics. The plan should also include how you will build up your own side.

...put your plan into practice for a bit...

5. Review and adjust the plan

What is the impact of what you are doing? How could you have more impact? How well is the campaign working for the group and the individuals within it? Make any changes you need in order to put the campaign in a stronger position.

1. Agree your campaign aims

A shared campaign goal is the concrete thing that you are working together to achieve. For example, 'keep the domestic violence shelter open in our town'.

You may also be motivated by broader over-arching aims, vision and values ('Smash the patriarchy', 'Equality and liberation' etc.). It is good to discuss these broader motivations and understand where each other is coming from. It is likely to be easier to work together if your vision and values are similar.

The difference between these over-arching aims and your campaign goal, is that the goal needs to be concrete and achievable enough that you can make a plan for how to make it happen.

Key questions

It can help for each individual involved to spend a bit of time working out their own hopes and motivations before bringing everyone together.

Individuals: What do I want this campaign to achieve? Why am I motivated to take part? What longer term aims does it help me towards?

Collectively: What are the similarities and differences in a) our aims and b) our motivations? Do we have enough in common to work together? What do we think is realistic to achieve together? What are our collectively agreed campaign goals?

In a coalition, potential member groups could start by answering the 'individual' questions and then all the groups could come together for the 'collective' questions.

Notes on group dynamics

People often find it hard to separate their motivations and values from their immediate and achievable goals. Make space for people to get out

all of the different reasons they want to be involved in the campaign. Acknowledge how important these are, as well as trying to identify the concrete goal you are making a plan for together. If everything you are coming up with seems too big to be achievable, try asking 'What is one step that would put us in a stronger position?' For example, if you want to transform the power dynamics of your workplace, a first step you could plan for might be getting a trade union recognised.

Also, look out for conflict coming up at this stage. If you have big differences, think carefully about whether you can set them aside to work for your immediate goals. There could also be benefits to splitting the group and forming two smaller ones that each have a different focus or ethos. Working with people who want similar things can release a lot of energy. On the other hand, a downside of splitting is that it may result in two groups that are too small to stick at a campaign for the long haul.

Alternatively, if you reach agreement on your goals easily this could be a sign you have a lot in common – or that you haven't had a full enough discussion! Look out later for signs later on that people are running on different assumptions about what the goals are – and be prepared to revisit this conversation if necessary.

2. Gather information and analyse the context

A strategic plan is based on a strong, collective understanding of your situation. This includes understanding the strengths of your own group and looking for potential allies, as well as knowing about the organisations that are acting against you.

Research

Some or all of you will probably need to do some research in order to have enough information. Try getting together to pool the knowledge you already have, then sending people away with questions to answer ready to share at the following meeting. This is likely to be an ongoing process, as each new piece of information will throw up new questions. See page 18 below for more detail on the practicalities of doing research.

Analysis

The end-goal of your analysis is to work out what is the way forward which will enable you to have the best impact towards your campaign goals. To help you reach that point, try to come to a good understanding of where the power lies in your situation – both your potential power, and the powers you are up against.

Key questions

These questions should help you analyse the situation, in order to work out how to have the most influence. For example:

Outside your group: Who are the players that have a potential influence on your goals? What is their attitude to your goals, and why? How much (potential) influence do they have, and why?

Your own group: What are your strengths? What (potential) allies could help you? What capacity / resources do you have? How could you increase your capacity and resources?

The situation: What possible opportunities can you spot? What important challenges do you face?

Notes on group dynamics

Research requires time, patience and a good head for detail. Not everyone needs to be involved in finding stuff out, but think carefully about how to share the information to everyone can be involved in the analysis. Present the information in a variety of ways so that everyone else can really get their heads round it all. For example, visual headers on big paper, detailed lists of information people can refer to and lots of opportunities to talk and ask questions.

Similarly, none of the analysis questions have clear cut answers, and you will all have different interpretations of the information. This is another good reason to explore the information together, rather than simply handing over the analysis to the person who looked things up!

3. Think creatively about ways forward

In order to come up with a plan that really works, come up with a rich pool of ideas about possible ways to have an influence in your situation.

All thinking is creative - but it helps to protect a bit of space which is just dedicated to dreaming up new ideas. One benefit is this helps you get off the tramlines of 'we always do what we've always done'! Once you have collected a good range of possible ways forward, you can think critically about which will help you achieve your goals.

Key questions

In order to support creativity, ask questions which have lots of potential answers. For example:

Are there players we could influence without too much effort?

What things could we do that build on our own strengths?

What are possible ways to respond to the challenges we face?

What things could we do to make use of the opportunities we've spotted?

Notes on group dynamics

Some people find it easier to be creative if you don't try to discuss and evaluate the ideas you are coming up with. Instead of picking suggestions apart to find problems with them, use them to spark new possibilities. Unrealistic ideas may have a grain of genius that points you towards a great strategy!

Similarly, don't worry if your ideas don't neatly fit the questions you're asking yourselves. Or if the things you are coming up with are a jumble of tactics, targets, and goals. Simply record everything you come up with ("Let's do a die-in!" "We need to undermine their PR offensive." "The important thing is to be an inclusive and welcoming group." "I know someone at the council who might be onside.") Later, you can organise the suggestions to help decide which ideas to go for .

4. Make a plan

This is the stage to draw together all your analysis and ideas, and start making some decisions. You are looking for a course of action that has a good chance of being effective in your situation, and which everyone can put their weight behind. Consider the likely impact of different ideas on your campaign goals, and what resources they require from your group.

Usually this will include making decisions about: which players you will target, how you can influence them, what allies to reach out to, what tactics are likely to be effective, and how you can build your own capacity and increase momentum over time.

How much detail your plan includes will vary depending on a number of factors. For a small, tight group, planning three months ahead, your plan might look like a sequence of tactics in chronological order. A five year plan might just decide on an overall approach to making change, and a set of intermediary goals to check you are headed in the right direction.

Key questions

Can you break down your campaign goal, and start by planning towards more immediate 'sub-goals'?

What group or organisation will you target (as 'opponents'?)

What is the most effective way of putting pressure on that target?

How can you build the capacity of your campaign?

What potential allies can you reach out to?

What tactics or activities could be effective that fit your overall approach to making change, and the capacity you have available?

How can you increase momentum over time so you build up pressure on the target and keep drawing in new people to get actively involved?

Group dynamics tips

This is the stage in the process where you actually commit yourself to some ideas or approaches and reject others. The dynamics of this stage can be challenging. You may need to be quite ruthless about setting some ideas aside, so you can concentrate your energies all together. Not everyone is going to find that easy, especially if their ideas are rejected!

Remind yourselves you are looking for something 'good enough to try' and no plan will be perfect for everyone. Whatever you decide on, commit to reviewing how it is working, and making changes if necessary. It may help to record all the alternative suggestions so they are easy to access at that review stage.

If you have enough capacity, then choosing two to three approaches that will work together may be effective. For example, one sub-group could work on challenging plans for a new waste incinerator and a second group on encouraging people locally to reduce the amount of waste they produce.

5. Review and adjust the plan

Once you've spent a bit of time implementing your plan, stop to review your impact. Campaigning is like a series of experiments. Each time we develop a plan it is our best guess about what will work. Trying it out gives us information we need to make a better guess and try again.

A lot of people will naturally evaluate how well your events and activities are going, for example considering how many people came along, or whether an action went according to plan. A different way of evaluating the situation is to try to assess the actual impact of your strategy. For example, you might consider your blockade of an oil refinery successful if people stayed in position for a long time and had a good time. Evaluating the impact of your wider strategy might include questions like whether blockades were helping towards your goal of stopping the refinery.

Key questions

What things are going well and what can you learn from that? Are there things that are going less well? What can you do about that?

What's your impact? What has changed in the real world as a result of your campaign activities? How does that change who has power in the situation?

Evaluating the situation. Has the situation changed, or do you have new information about it? Are there new opportunities you can make the most of? Do you face new challenges?

Adjust the plan. What changes do you need to make in order to make the most of things that are working well, and address issues?

Group dynamics tips

One key question is at what stage to do a review. It is important to honour the time you've spent creating a plan, and stick to it for long enough to give it a fair chance. However, the point is to win the campaign, not to follow the plan! So it is also important to spend time together working out if you are doing that, and what you need to change.

Make sure to recognise the work you have done, and the things you have achieved. If you aren't having an immediate impact on your goals, morale may be low and people may be feeling sensitive to criticism. Dedicate time to noticing what has gone well and what you appreciate about each other and the group.

Strategy planning tools

The following activities can be used in a group meeting to analyse your situation or explore different ways forward. They are designed to enable more people to participate and engage with the process.

The tools are listed in a rough chronological order, following our suggested process above, though you may vary this depending on the needs of your group. Some tools provide alternative 'ways in' to the same end point – for example 'pyramid of goal' and 'visual aim setting' are both ways for lots of people to get involved in shaping your campaign goals.

See also our *Tools for Meetings and Workshops* guide for more general facilitation tools.

Visual aim setting

This tool gives everyone chance to think about their vision for the group before being influenced by other people's ideas. It is also good for people who like visual and tactile activities.

Ask: 'What do you want this group to achieve?' or 'What will it look like in three years time if this group is successful?'

Provide coloured pens, bits of fabric, magazines with nice pictures and text, scissors, glue. Take 15-20 minutes to each think on your own, and represent your answer to the question as a picture, collage, flow-chart, mind-map or any other visual.

Then each person in turn explains their picture and what they were trying to put across. When everyone has had their turn ask yourselves: 'What are the similarities?' 'What are the differences?' 'Is there anything we need to explore further before deciding together on our aims?'

If there are a lot of you, this stage can be done in small groups, then feed back key points to the main group.

Campaign goals spectrum line

This is a tool to help people express all the different things they want to achieve with the campaign. The second step is to use this material to focus in on choosing a campaign goal that can be used as the basis of a plan.

The reason for the two step process is that people often find it challenging to pick an achievable goal to plan towards. It is often easier for people if they have space to articulate the big, over-arching reasons why they want to be part of the campaign (e.g. 'world peace'), and then see how their specific campaign (e.g. against the local weapons factory) feeds towards that.

Stage one

The first step is for everyone to write down the different goals they want to achieve that have led them to get involved in the campaign. Each one should go on a separate piece of paper.

Each person then adds their own goals to a spectrum along the floor or wall, with long term over-arching aims at one end, and immediate short-term goals at the other. In the example of the campaign against a local weapons factory, you might have 'world peace' at the long term end, and 'increase awareness of where the weapons go' somewhere near the short term end.

Take time to read each others' ideas. Give people chance to move their goals based on how other people have placed theirs on the spectrum. You might also cluster similar ideas together.

Be clear that what you have at this stage represents the spread of motivations in the group – not necessarily something you all agree on. You don't need to have complete agreement on everything you have down – but if major disagreements come up, make time to discuss them. Otherwise, simply record what you have (e.g. take photos), so that none of the ideas get lost.

Stage two

Focus in on choosing a concrete campaign goal which you will use to make a plan together. This is where you definitely need agreement!

Explain the campaign goal should be a meaningful, concrete step in the direction of your long-term goals. In the weapon's factory example, concrete steps might be 'close the factory down', 'convince pension funds to divest' or 'expose their illegal weapons sales'.

The goal should also be achievable enough that you can make a plan towards it. You may need to do research and analyse the situation before deciding which goal you will base your plan around. In the example above, you might decide your campaign ultimately wants to shut the factory down, but you will base your initial plan around divestment as a first step in that direction.

Give everyone time to think individually or in pairs, then ask for suggestions. This might be one of the goals already written down, or something new they have come up with. Compare the things you've heard and try to reach agreement.

Research

This is not a facilitation tool! However, it is an important part of the strategy planning process so we've included some key tips here.

See the Corporate Watch guide: 'Investigating Companies: a Do-it-yourself handbook' for a lot more detail on doing effective research for campaigns. Available for free on their website corporatewatch.org

Make the task more manageable by coming at it with a clear goal, e.g. 'find the information we need in order to have an influence.' Spread the workload by splitting up the stuff you need to know into different areas.

Look for people who've already done the research you need. For example, get tips from other campaigners working on the same issue, get information from sympathetic councillors or projects working in a similar area. There may be people who aren't campaigning as such, but who

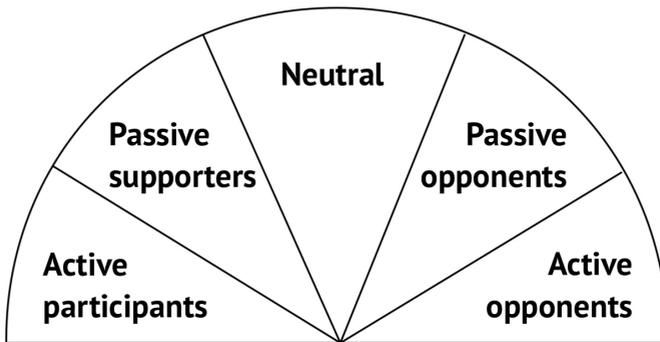
know a lot because they are directly affected. For example, talking to lots of other people who are claiming benefits will give you a broader view of the issues people face, compared to just hearing from people in your group.

Use the internet – with caution! There is a wealth of information on the web, but it can suck up a lot of your time. Try to get clear what you want to know *before* opening up a search engine! Make the most of human connections, e.g. use social media groups to make contacts, and then communicate in person.

Keep a note of where you found things out - e.g. the web address, the date of the newspaper, the contacts of the person you spoke to. That way it's easy to check back later. Inevitably, more questions will come up when you have a better overall understanding of the situation.

Spectrum of support

This tool, called the ‘spectrum of support’, helps campaigners think through who they are trying to reach.



The spectrum splits up the general public according to their opinion and level of activity on your campaign goals. The idea is that encouraging any segment of people to move to the left has a positive impact on your goal. For example, if passive opponents start to see different perspectives on

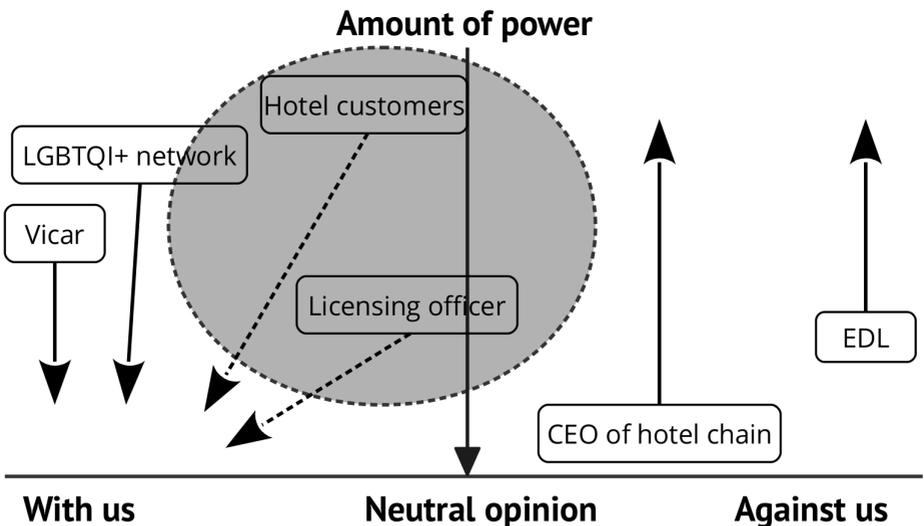
the issue, then active opponents become isolated.

Use this tool as a simple visual back-up to explore the impact of focusing on different sets of people. Most campaigns need to focus on supporting passive supporters to become active participants. Beyond that, you might just prioritise one segment. For example, at the start of a campaign, you might work on raising awareness of the issues, so that currently neutral people become passive supporters.

Power mapping

This tool comes with a health warning! It is quite complex, and asks people to process a lot of information at once. It is best used in a small and experienced group. Even then, be prepared to take it slow, and keep checking for shared understanding!

The horizontal line represents the opinions of the different players – in agreement with you on the left, opposed to you on the right and neutral in the middle.



Campaign to stop EDL meeting in local hotel: Mobilising the vicar and LGBTQI+ network to help pull hotel customers and the licensing officer further over to our side and get them to exercise more power.

The vertical line represents how much power the players have – the closer to the bottom, the more power. It is important to note is that this power is specifically in relation to your goal. For example, you might think an MP had more power in general than a town councillor. However, if that councillor was on the planning committee for the project you are opposing, they have a lot more relevant power.

The first step is to map different potential targets and allies – according to how much they agree with your campaign goals, and how much practical power they have to support or thwart those goals.

The distinction between a set of people changing their opinion, and changing their level of power is crucial to the tool. For example, a sub-contractor that decided not to work for a company might not have changed their opinion at all, but they lose a lot of power to make the project happen. By contrast, if ‘the general public’ changed their opinion to support your goals more, but didn’t do anything, they wouldn’t have any extra power in relation to your goals.

The second step is to use the map to visualise what impact it might have to move one of the players. For example, if a major migrants’ rights NGO was campaigning for more humane conditions in detention centres, and you persuaded them to campaign against detention centres altogether, it might have a big impact on public opinion and other NGOs in the field.

NB: Simply looking at the power map won’t tell you which player could influence others. But when you move one piece, you can then move other pieces to help you visualise the knock on effects it might have.

Appreciative enquiry

This is a whole approach to making change within a group, campaign or project which focuses on what is already working well. We cannot do it full justice here, but we have included it because it is a powerful way of helping people see what they are achieving. This in turn can help people approach the future with optimism and creativity. Loss of morale is one of the biggest threats to voluntary campaign groups, so it makes sense to integrate ways of boosting your confidence into your strategy process.

Start by asking questions like: What's going well? What do we enjoy? What motivates us? In what ways are we effectively reaching people? What positive impacts are we having? Where would we like to get to?

Bridge from here into questions like: What can we build on and develop? How could we enjoy the campaign even more? How can we increase our positive impacts?

SWOT analysis

SWOT stands for strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The tool has very corporate associations, but is still useful! The idea is that at the analysis stage, you identify the strengths and weaknesses of your campaign, any opportunities you can take advantage of, and threats you need to deal with. Then make sure any plan you make takes these into account.

Example: campaign for a new skate park

Our strengths	Our weaknesses
<p>Strong social media campaign</p> <p>Strong support base among young people / young adults / parents.</p> <p>Support from youth workers and some councillors</p> <p>Crowdfunding campaign</p>	<p>Not engaging enough with people living close to the proposed site</p> <p>Inexperience / nervousness talking to councillors / planning department</p> <p>No formal organisation fronting the campaign.</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>Showcasing skateboarding as skilled sport – pop up skate park at town festival, school sports day</p> <p>Building relationships by getting involved in local litter picks, volunteering at community events.</p> <p>Upcoming local elections.</p>	<p>Negative stereotypes: noisy / drug taking / drinking / 'gangs of youth'</p> <p>Local people mobilising against it.</p> <p>Landowner pulling out due to pressure from neighbours.</p>

We have included it because threats and weaknesses in particular are often the elephant in the room, that people don't want to talk openly about. By bringing these things into the open, you may be able to agree ways of dealing with issues.

That said, the negative language of 'weaknesses' and 'threats' may or may not be helpful for your group! You can use the tool in the same way using 'areas to develop' and 'challenges' as alternative headers. Even with this adaptation, it is obviously a different approach from appreciative enquiry above. Use your judgement as to what will be most helpful to you.

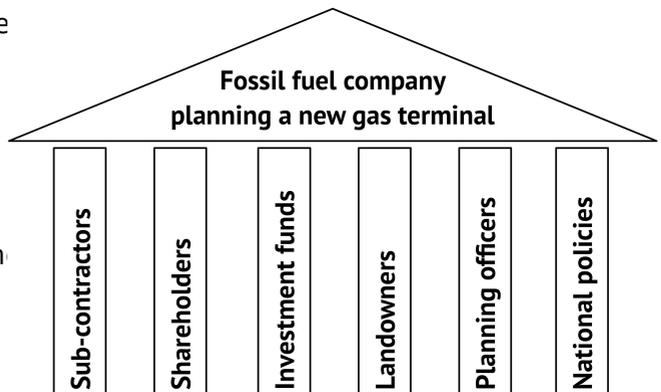
Pillars of power

This is a tool for helping you break down your goals and work out what players to target. The idea is that the main target, or the situation you are trying to change will be 'propped up' or enabled by other players. For example a fossil energy company will be able to create a new gas terminal by relying on sub-contractors, planning officers at the council, willing land-owners etc.

Even if the main target is very committed to the thing you are trying to stop, you may be able to stop them by removing some of the things that enable them to carry on.

Decide together what goes into the top box. Then split into small groups or pairs (if the group is big enough) to explore what enables that situation to happen. Come back together to share your ideas.

Next, explore which 'pillars' it would be most



effective to focus on. Ideally, you are looking for a player that plays a major role in enabling your campaign target, but that you can easily have an influence over. If no one player fits the bill, try looking for two or three you could work on in combination.

Skills-tasks match

This tool helps the group recognise the skills and resources they have access to. It can help spread jobs out away from the 'usual suspects'. And it may help you think of new ideas for activities.

Everyone writes down what skills, equipment or other resources they have access to (on separate pieces of paper). Encourage people to write down everything they can think of, not just things that are obviously relevant to campaigning. Include things people can borrow, e.g.: "the neighbour's trailer", "my son's printer" or "the megaphone from the football club". When everyone is finished writing, have a look at what you have - it's best to stick the pieces of paper on the wall with blue-tack.

You could then use these to allocate tasks and enrich ideas when you come to deciding on tactics. Or they could spark new ideas – e.g. sewing and theatre could come together to give you the idea of a street carnival.

Ideastorm

This simple tool is useful in lots of meeting situations. The idea is that everyone throws out their suggestions in response to a simple prompt, e.g. 'possible ways forward'.

Set it up by explaining you want to get out as many ideas as possible, and you want to free people up to be creative. Encourage people to keep the ideas flowing, without worrying about whether they are practical or effective. Ask them to use existing ideas as a springboard for new ones, instead of getting side-tracked by discussing or evaluating them as you go along. It may help to reassure people there will be space for analysing and developing the ideas later in the process.

Impact spectrum lines

This is a way of helping the group focus on two key strategic questions: 'What will the impact be on our target?' 'What will the impact be on our group?' These questions are relevant whenever you are making decisions about what to do in a campaign.

Process

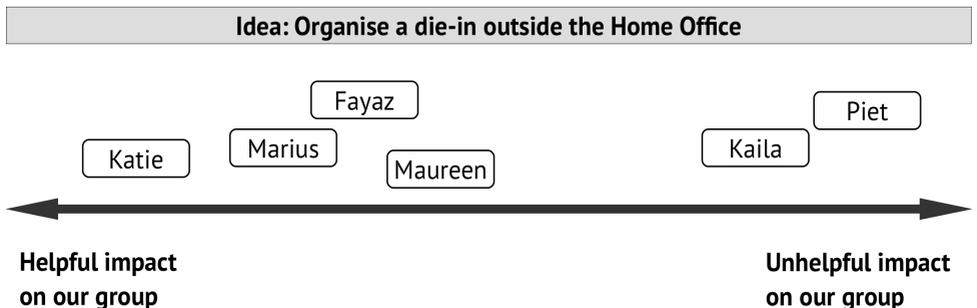
Take the first idea you want to explore, and work out enough details about it for people to be able to assess the impact it would have.

Next ask everyone to arrange themselves along a spectrum line with 'impact on the target will be helpful to our campaign' on one end, and 'impact on the target will be unhelpful to our campaign' on the other. If you are face to face, people can imagine this line on the floor, and physically move to the position that represents their view. In an online meeting, people can drag an icon, or their name onto a line that is drawn on the screen.

Next, ask people to explain why they chose the position they did. Use this conversation to draw out key factors to address. Work out whether there could be ways of adapting the idea to deal with concerns.

Repeat the process with a new spectrum: 'helpful impact on our group' at one end, and 'unhelpful impact on our group' at the other.

If there are a few different ways forward you want to explore, you could then repeat both spectrum lines with other ideas. We don't recommend doing this with more than three ideas – it could be overwhelming!!



The spectrum line is a good tool for exploring and getting issues out. You may want to step away from it and take a short break before coming back together to make actual decisions.

Capacity check

It can be helpful to build in this tool whenever you make a decision about doing something as a group! It is very easy to make an abstract decision about the most effective way forward, without checking if you have the capacity between you to actually do the work.

Start by giving each person space to reflect about how much time they can commit to the campaign (per week or month, or as a one-off in the lead up to a big event). This may vary depending on what the task is – for example, some people may be able to squeeze in online tasks during their working day, but struggle to come to things in the evening.

Hear back from each person. That could be a go round in a small group, or people could write down what they can contribute.

Next break down the campaign idea you have in mind. How much time will it take, and what kind of activity? How does that compare to the total capacity you have available? Can the campaign idea be adapted if you don't have capacity? Or can you start by getting more people involved, and then re-assess?

Timelines

This is a way of laying out all the things you plan to do in order, so you can work out how it all fits together.

A simple timeline might simply show weeks or months along the top, and then events below.

A more complex one could have several parallel sets of activity below, for example one line showing outreach activities, another showing meetings and another showing actions against your target.

Campaign plan pyramid

This is a way of representing all the different strands of your campaign in a simple visual that it is easy for people to grasp and remember.

Start with your main campaign goal at the top. At the next level down, put the two to three major 'sub-goals' you need to achieve in order to make the main goal possible. For example, in a campaign to save your local woodland from development, sub-goals might be for the woods to be owned and managed by local people, for planning permission to be denied on a specific threatened development, and to have a strong base of local people organised to defend the woods.

Go through the same process to work out the next level down. For example, in order for planning permission to be denied, you may need to win over 'undecided' members of the planning committee, and get hundreds of objection letters from local people.

Facilitating campaign strategy planning

A campaign strategy is a plan for how you can have the best chance of winning your campaign. This is a guide to how you can create this plan together as a campaign group. That way the plan makes the most of everyone's different ideas and strengths, and people are more likely to be committed to putting it in practice. This guide explores how you can make campaign planning work as a group. It includes a suggested process for your meetings and a set of facilitation tools you can use to help you agree your aims, analyse your situation, come up with creative ideas, draw everything together in a plan and evaluate how it is working.

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