



A Hunter

Community Alliance?

INFORMATION GUIDE





Acknowledgement of Country and Traditional Owners

We acknowledge Aboriginal Peoples as Australia's First Peoples and the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we work to build a stronger, fairer and kinder society that values children, young people, families and individuals.



Economic development is essential for a flourishing society. The challenge is for that development to be equitable and sustainable, socially and environmentally⁵. Broad based community alliances work for the common good.

Information Guide

The purpose of this publication is to provide information for those who are interested in exploring an involvement with, or information about, the emerging Hunter Community Alliance.

It will assist in responding to questions that organisations might have about becoming sponsors or partners of the Alliance so as to participate in community organising, that is organising that builds relationships for the common good. The principle of the common good emphasises that all people are connected and responsible for the further development of human society as a whole.

The following documents are included:

1. A Hunter Community Alliance	3
2. Governance	6
3. Q&A for a Hunter Community Alliance	9
4. Australia Broad Based Community Organising	12
5. Sponsoring Committees	

“Do not do for others what they can do for themselves” - Ed Chambers

*“Poverty is not just a lack of money; it is not having the capability to realize one’s full potential as a human being.”
- Amartya Sen*





A Hunter

Community Alliance

To give leaders of organisations sufficient information about this kind of alliance so that they are able to:

- Make an informed decision whether to commit some staff to the 2 Day Foundations Training Institute
- Provide timely feedback to decide whether to progress with a Hunter Community Alliance or not.

Note

This paper should be read in conjunction with the associated papers 'Q&A for a Hunter Community Alliance' and 'Broad Based Organising in Australia April 2018'.

Introduction

A Hunter Community Alliance is still in the Exploration stage; that is why it is a question about a Hunter Community Alliance. If it is to come about it will be those organisations that become partners that will fund it and determine every facet. These organisations will come from the community, religious, union, school and other spheres of civil society.

The initiative for such an alliance of community service organisations in the Hunter began early in 2018 with an approach from James Whelan of The Change Agency Education and Training Institute¹ based in Newcastle to David Barrow Lead Organiser for the Sydney Alliance².

The Hunter Region has a tradition of activism³. Many gains have been made to improve the social and natural environment. The challenge remains however to transform activism that rises and falls around particular issues to a long term broad based community organising structure that continues beyond passing issues for the long term pursuit of social and environmental justice⁴.

Economic development is essential for a flourishing society. The challenge is for that development to be equitable and sustainable, socially and environmentally⁵. Such broad based community alliances work for the common good.

¹ <https://www.thechangeagency.org/about-us/who-we-are/>

² <https://www.sydneyalliance.org.au> also see this 2014 video of the Sydney Alliance https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=360&v=7buT_cYwuyE

³ <http://newcastlemuseum.com.au/Exhibitions/Exhibitions/Archives/2017/RAD>

⁴ Tattersall: 2010 Power in Coalition, Strategies for Strong Unions and Social Change

⁵ Pickett and Wilkinson: 2010 The Spirit Level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone



Purpose and Principles

The purpose of these kinds of alliances is to strengthen organisations, and the connectivity between them, through focused conversations, training and advocacy so that the common good is advanced. Collaboration builds power. Collaboration is difficult to maintain that is why there is a strong emphasis on building and maintaining relationships between organisational leaders. Relationships come before the discernment of issues.

Such alliances do not need to reinvent the wheel. There is a template for purpose, principles and governance developed by the Sydney Alliance that has adapted overseas models to the Australian context. So a Hunter Community Alliance could be modelled on the Sydney Alliance which comes from a community organising tradition that began in 1930's Chicago. It is the Industrial Areas Foundation⁶ that has developed the practice and principles of this kind of organising and the network has affiliates in more than 60 cities in the USA, major cities in the UK and now in Sydney, Brisbane⁷ and Auckland. Every affiliate is separately incorporated yet as part of a network receives and gives mutual support and mentoring.

For integrity's sake received models need to be discussed, debated, and contextualized by the local organisations. It is recommended therefore that interested organisations as a beginning point refer to

the Sydney Alliance web site⁸ to see how it arrived at its own contextualization of principles, purpose and governance.

It will be those organisations that participate in the development of a Hunter Community Alliance that determine specifically for the Hunter context what the purposes, principles and governance structure are.

Hallmarks of similar alliances are:

- ▶ Listening with integrity – between leaders while also enabling those whose voices are not usually heard
- ▶ Relationships before issues – the Why comes before the What and How
- ▶ Respect for diversity
- ▶ From private concern to public issue
- ▶ An organising cycle involving relating and listening, research and planning, action and evaluation.
- ▶ Decision making by consensus
- ▶ Non partisan political
- ▶ Leadership development and training
- ▶ Self-funded – does not receive money from government

⁶ <http://www.industrialareasfoundation.org/>

⁷ <https://www.qldcommunityalliance.org/>

⁸ <https://www.sydneyalliance.org.au/>



A model for Phased Implementation

An alliance is not formed overnight. The model presented below is one example of how an evolution can occur over 6 years. With Newcastle's size and interconnectivity, it will probably take less than four years to Founding.

A model for a Phased Implementation

YEAR	THEME	DESCRIPTION
Year 1	Exploring	Over a twelve-month period, relationships are built with leaders of organisations to see how an alliance could benefit their organisation and the wider society that it serves. Two-day training events take participants deeper into understanding the principles and practices of this kind of broad based organising. Networks begin to be built.
Year 2	Forming	As more organisations participate funds are sought from those organisations to help develop the Alliance through the employment of an Organiser. A sponsoring committee is formed to assist and guide the Organiser. The Organiser's role is to develop the links between existing partners and to extend the alliance network. Training continues and small-scale joint advocacy and action begins.
Year 3	Widening	There is an effort to broaden the diversity of organisations that belong so they more represent the diversity of the region. Training and small-scale advocacy and actions continue. The Alliance Council is formed and the Board constituted.
Year 4	Founding	With the Alliance Council and Board in place, and having developed sufficient size to make a significant contribution to the public conversation a large public assembly is held to publically announce the founding of the Alliance. At this Assembly significant commitments will be sought from public officials on the issues discerned through the organising cycle.
Year 5	Deepening	The focus is on making staff, members and publics of organisations even more aware of the benefits of the Alliance; how belonging strengthens the organisation and more effectively builds a fairer society.
Year 6	Strengthening	As the Alliance matures it considers how it is using its growing influence responsibly and effectively for the common good.

The development of a Hunter Community Alliance is currently in the Exploration phase.

A Hunter Community Alliance

– Governance Structure

A Hunter Community Alliance – Governance Structure

GROUP TYPE	MEMBERSHIP	ROLE	MEETINGS
The Alliance	Membership is of organisations not individuals. They are termed partners as they all participate in governance, strategic planning, actions and funding.	Works together for a more just and sustainable region for the common good.	The whole Alliance with all its partners, their members, and gathered interest groups meet as needed in large Assemblies for powerful advocacy. Other forms of advocacy are also undertaken.
Alliance Council	Each organisation that is a partner contributes two representatives to the Alliance Council. These representatives are to be from (or endorsed and encouraged by) the leadership group of the partner organisation.	The work of the Council is to oversee and direct all the activities of the Alliance; these include listening campaigns, research action teams, specific task groups and various forms of advocacy. Organisers employed by the Alliance assist the Council in this work.	The Council meets at least four times a year and is co-chaired by representatives from two different spheres.
Alliance Board	Is elected by the Council at its AGM. The Board consists of eight members: usually two from each of the religious, union and community spheres and two from wider afield to ensure an adequate skill mix. The Board holds the legal and financial responsibility for the incorporated body.	The eight-member board holds the legal and financial responsibility for the incorporated body. The Lead Organiser is responsible to the Board.	The Board meets at least three times per year.
Friends of the Alliance	Are individuals because of the skills and resources they bring who participate by contributing in diverse ways, but are not partners or members of the Council.	Accountable to the Board	As appropriate

Table version 1. 13 February 2019

Governance

The Governance of the Sydney Alliance has this form:

Each organisation that is a member contributes two representatives to the Alliance Council. The Council meets at least four times each year. The work of the Council is to oversee and direct all the activities of the Alliance. This Council elects an eight-member board that holds the legal and financial responsibility for the incorporated body.

Development so far

June 4 2018

25 people from eight organisations took part in a presentation by David Barrow, Lead Organiser for the Sydney Alliance, and Sister Maribeth Larkin, an organizer with 40 year's experience from Los Angeles.

Sept 1

25 people from the Uniting and Catholic churches participated in a workshop on how this form of community organising is consistent with Christian discipleship.

Sept 24

43 people from 11 organisations attended a presentation by Sister Maribeth Larkin and Liuanga Palu (a Pacific Islander leader with the Sydney Alliance) at a Politics in the Pub.

Nov 30-Dec1

20 people from 13 organisations participated in a two-day Orientation workshop for leaders of interested organisations.

Organisations interested in being part of the conversation so far

Awabakal Land Council

Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle *

Climate Action Newcastle *

Community Disability Alliance Hunter *

Calvary Mater Hospital *

Compass Housing

Hunter Homeless Connect

* Life Without Barriers

Mission Australia *

Northern Settlement Services

* Salvation Army *

Samaritan's

St Vincent de Paul *

The Wilderness Society *

Uniting Church *

Uniting Regional Council *

(* indicates participation in 2-day orientation held 30 Nov-1 Dec 2018)

Authorised by the pre-sponsoring committee of a Hunter Community Alliance (21 February, 2019)

Teresa Brierley

Catholic Diocese of Maitland-

Newcastle Dave Belcher

Community Disability Alliance

Hunter Jenny Cush

Community Disability Alliance Hunter

Debbie Carstens

Northern Settlement Services

Garry Derkenne

Adamstown Uniting

Church John Hayes

Climate Action Newcastle

Neil Smith

The Hunter Presbytery of the Uniting Church

The committee wants to thank everyone who has assisted in the development of the Alliance so far: all those passionate advocates that have asked hard questions that have helped shape our thinking and documents; and the leaders that have engaged constructively as they consider the possibilities for their organisations.



Q & A

A Hunter Community Alliance

1. What's the difference between partners and sponsors?

Initial nomenclature can be confusing. Organisations become partners with, and therefore members of, the Alliance by contributing funds to make the work of the Alliance possible. Sponsors are organisations that in the formative stage of the alliance contribute funds to employ an organiser to make connections with organisations that do not yet belong. When the Alliance is formed and launched they are no longer termed sponsors.

2. What's the role of Organisers?

Organisers are employed by the Alliance to facilitate connections between existing organisations and developing relationships with new organisations. They also support the Alliance Council and Board in their work. They are funded by the Alliance.

3. If I don't belong to an organisation, how can I get involved?

The Sydney Alliance has a group called *Friends of the Sydney Alliance*. These support the Alliance by fundraising and making other practical contributions.

4. How will we choose and prioritise issues?

The Alliance Council, which consists of two representatives of each partner organisation, oversees

the Organising Cycle. This begins with listening campaigns that involve staff of organisations and those they engage with. The issues that arise are then presented at a plenary and are prioritised according to which one organisations are most prepared to commit time and resources.

5. Governance structure? What is this?

The governance structure consists of the Alliance Council and the Alliance Board. The council consists of two members from each partner organisation and meets at least four times a year. The Council oversees the organising cycle and leadership development training.

The Council elects a Board of eight members to hold the legal and financial responsibility of the Alliance because it is an incorporated body. Usually two reps each come from the community, religious and union spheres and two from the Council or elsewhere.

6. Will we all be involved in direct work? What roles will we play?

Each partner organisation will have a task group who lead the participation in the Alliance. Two will be the reps to the Council plus a small group of other organisation staff. In the organisation the task group will communicate to the organisation how participation in the Alliance will strengthen the organisation. They will receive training and then become trainers

themselves. They will also take up leadership roles in different parts of the organising cycle. This develops their own and the leadership capacity of others. Some of the roles in the organising cycle can be 'researchers' (people with the ability to ask common sense questions and know where to go for answers); leaders of listening groups; co-chairs of Council meetings; members of task groups; networkers; advocates in their own and other organisations and to decision makers.

7. Why should we support this?

It will strengthen your organisation by:

- ▶ Developing strong trusting relationships between leaders of organisations
- ▶ Collaboration with other organisations
- ▶ Leadership development of members of organisations
- ▶ Developing the power of influence of your organisation
- ▶ Empowering those your organisation engages with
- ▶ Enabling your organisation to go to decision makers not only with public issues but well researched solutions supported by a diversity of civil society
- ▶ Your organisation not being able to be wedged because of the diversity of the Alliance it is part of
- ▶ It builds the common good

8. How do we balance sector involvement?

An effective community alliance is one that represents the diversity of its context. This means developing relationships with a diverse range of organisations. What enables them to work together is their desire to seek the common good and the realisation that this is more likely to be progressed by working together where we can.

9. What's the commitment required?

For each partner organisation there is the commitment of staff and resources. Initially this is extra work but over time it changes the way organisations work especially in the way the focus is on the development of relationships - why we do what we do and what we can bring to the table and what we can achieve together. Each organisation will contribute funds according to its capacity; as well as meeting spaces, printing, workshop resources; and most importantly the wisdom of their experience and their connections

with people of influence.

10. How do we manage 'territory'?

The development of trusting relationships between organisational leaders enables frank and honest conversations about all kinds of issues including those about 'territory'.

11. Cost

Initially funds are required to engage an organiser for two days a week for six months. This is estimated to be \$30,000. This requires organisations that want to see a Hunter Alliance formed, to commit what they can as soon as they can. After formation, partners commit an amount annually to enable the work of the Alliance to continue. One full time organiser and peripherals costs about \$150K.

12. How do we prevent one issue or organisation from dominating?

The development of trusting relationships enables frank and honest conversation that make decision-making by consensus possible. We are all working for the common good. Public issues that will fracture the Alliance will not be considered. Large organisations are needed for the resources they bring and in working for the common good there is respect for all kinds of diversity including the size of organisations.

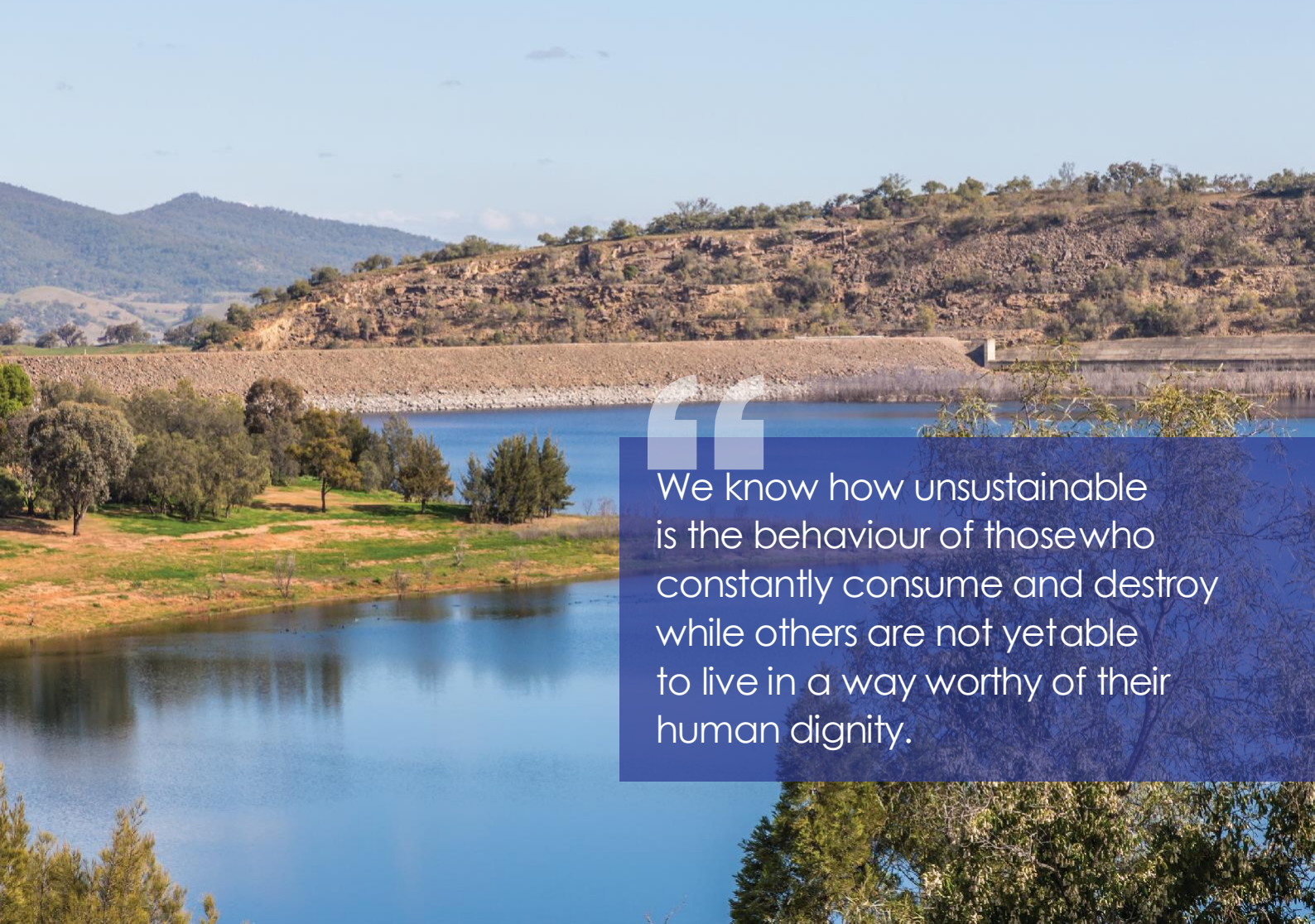
13. Who isn't at the table?

Usually the weakest and most powerful are not explicitly at the table. This can be because the weakest are under resourced and under organised; while the most powerful can tend not to like sharing power or are just so focused on their part of achieving justice for all. So partners need to be very deliberate in establishing relationships right across the spectrum of organisations.

14. Who are eligible to join?

Any organisations working for the common good who share the purpose and values of the Alliance can be considered for membership. It is the Board who makes this decision.

Government bodies and political parties do not join, because to be effective in advocacy right across the political spectrum the Alliance needs to be non-partisan political. One of its purposes is also to hold elected officials to account and interests become too difficult to manage if they are in the room.



We know how unsustainable is the behaviour of those who constantly consume and destroy while others are not yet able to live in a way worthy of their human dignity.

15. What's the expectation of organisations?

This is partly answered in Questions 8 and 10: what is the commitment required and what will membership cost financially? The other expectation of partners is that they make participation a priority - an integral part of their cultural development and spectrum of advocacy and engagement strategies.

16. What Region and what name?

In the longer term this will be determined by those organisations relationships are created with and who come to participate. In the shorter term this will be geographically limited to the six LGA's that comprise the Joint Organisation of Councils. These are: Upper Hunter, Cessnock, Maitland, Port Stephens, Newcastle and Lake Macquarie. The initial name was tentatively the Hunter-Newcastle Community Alliance. Participants at the first two-day orientation thought that including Newcastle in the name would

not be helpful, as other LGAs would take it to be Newcastle centric. Therefore the name is currently A Hunter Community Alliance. It will be the Sponsoring organisations that will finally determine the name.

17. How do smaller organisations have an equal say?

Each partner organisation, no matter how big or small, has the same number of reps at the Alliance Council, which is two each. There needs to be respect for what each organisation brings in terms of all kinds of resources.

Authorised by the Pre-sponsoring committee of a Hunter Community Alliance

21 February 2019

Australian broad-based community organising

1. What is a broad-based organisation? (BBO)

- ▶ An organisation that brings together diverse civil society organisations including community organisations, unions, charities, schools and religious organisations to advance the common good and achieve a fair, just and sustainable region or city.
- ▶ Broad Based Organisations do this by providing opportunities for people to have a say in decisions that affect them through the discipline and culture of community organising.
- ▶ Strictly non-partisan, but political - in the sense that they are engaged in the future welfare of the region.
- ▶ Dues based structure “hard money”, all partner organisations fund the BBO.
- ▶ Does not accept government money.
- ▶ Council structure where all partners that contribute have equal say on the agenda and tactics of the BBO.
- ▶ Permanent and long term - employed professional organiser(s) supports the work of the BBO.

Features of Community Organising

- ▶ Uses the organising cycle, building relationship - listening deeply to members - issue and power analysis - action - evaluation.
- ▶ Builds power before taking action
- ▶ Keeps to specific cultures:
 - o Relationships; build trust across diversity.
 - o Developing new leaders; politics is too important to leave to politicians.
 - o Action; action to an organisation is like oxygen to the body.
 - o Accountability; organisations and leaders hold each other to the commitments they make publicly.

- o Punctuality; organisations and leaders value each other's time.
- o Reflective practice; reading, evaluation and discernment
- ▶ Typically, large mass-participation meetings and assemblies

Broad Based Organising (Alliance Organising) in Australia:

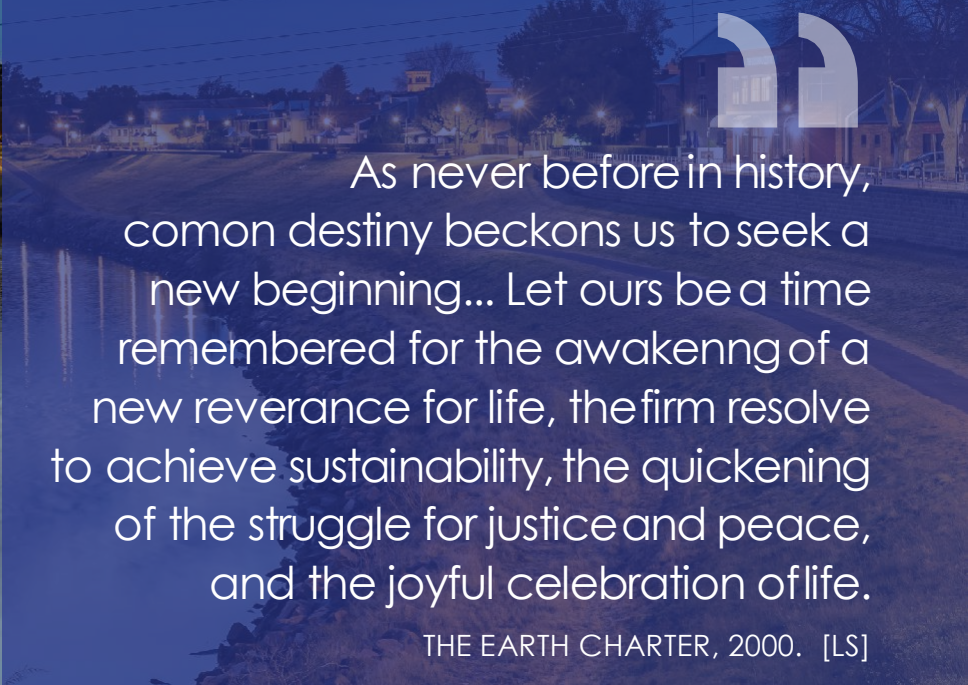
- ▶ There are two Alliances in Australia, both affiliated with the Industrial Areas Foundation. They are the Sydney Alliance and the Queensland Community Alliance. Both are Not For Profit Companies Limited by Guarantee.
- ▶ Alliances in Australia both adopted three goals:
 1. Leadership development of individuals through community organising training
 2. Strengthening partner organisations through development and connecting to other organisations
 3. Taking collective action for the common good
- ▶ It typically means that the Alliances have three types of activities:

Training:

- ▶ Culture of training through practice
- ▶ Foundations (2 Day) Training
- ▶ National Community Organising (6 Day) Training
- ▶ Internship/Apprenticeship programs
- ▶ Internal training within organisations

Collaborations

- ▶ Partner organisations working cooperatively because of the relationships they have developed thanks to the Alliance.
- ▶ Broad coalitions able to react quickly because of the depth of trust, trained membership and common vision of partners.



As never before in history, comon destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning... Let ours be a time remembered for the awakenng of a new reverance for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life.

THE EARTH CHARTER, 2000. [LS]

Alliance Action for the Common Good

- ▶ Drawn from deep listening to the community
- ▶ Negotiated between the partners – only what all partners can work on together
- ▶ Campaign teams that are cross-membership
- ▶ Acting with common voice, but with diverse expressions, gifts, contributions.
- ▶ Local and region wide action
- ▶ Both leaders and organisers ensure that the Alliance partners demonstrate as wide a spread of the geographic, ethnic, religious, social and organisational diversity of their regions.
- ▶ The focus of Alliances is not only on ‘campaigns’ but also on the development of strong civic organisations, engaging a much broader group of leaders beyond just “social justice types”.
- ▶ Australian Alliances have adapted the universals and language of community organising to the Australian context.

What do organisations contribute?

- ▶ Two reps with decision making power to be part of a council
- ▶ Dues, negotiated by the organisations together
- ▶ Time and talent based on appetite

What is a sponsoring committee?

- ▶ A committee of leaders with both appetite and

capacity in a region who want to raise the money for a permanent broad-based organisation. It functions include oversight of the first stages of the effort, coordination and raising the resources.

It typically has three phases:

1. Raising the resources for an organiser (seed money)
2. Raising the resources for a permanent broad based organisation and supporting the organiser in building an action team that has representatives from each organisation that contributes dues.
3. Transitioning from a sponsoring committee to a formal Leaders Council of each organisation that contributes dues.

Organising opportunity in NSW

The BBO/IAF/Alliance model in NSW can leverage significant resources that are already established through the Sydney Alliance.

- ▶ A legal & financial structure already established through the Sydney Alliance Board (which would likely transition to a NSW Community Alliance). This structure is distinct from the “Sydney Alliance Council” which is the group that brings together the representatives from each partner organisation for city based planning, strategy and decisions.
- ▶ An admin base, database, affiliation to IAF that provides mentoring from veteran organisers, professional supervision.
- ▶ Access, intel and networks with academics, experts, politicians, media and organisations across NSW and in Sydney.

Queensland Communication Alliance

Our Wins For The Queensland Community

Community Engaged In Successful Fight For Solutions For Logan Kids, Including \$2 Million For Six New Maternity Hubs In Logan.

- ▶ June 2015: At our Logan Assembly, Queensland Minister Shannon Fentiman committed to \$75,000 a year for two years in funding for the Logan Community Group Alliance to organise the community to engage in the Logan Together Collective Impact project.
- ▶ May 2017: Health Minister Cameron Dick announced \$2m in annual funding for six maternity hubs in Logan, an initiative of Logan Together, successfully fought for and supported by our Alliance.
- ▶ The first 3 hubs opened in November 2017.

50% concession on public transport fares for asylum seekers.

- ▶ December 2015: A delegation of Alliance leaders met with the Transport Minister to push for transport concessions for asylum seekers - presenting over 2,000 petition signatures.
- ▶ June 2016: Transport Minister Jackie Trad announced public transport concessions for asylum seekers in Queensland.
- ▶ April 2017: 50% concessional public transport fares for Asylum seekers and unemployed came into effect.

Collective Impact Project Working On Mental Health In West Moreton

- ▶ October 2015: West Moreton Health and Hospital Service, and DDWM Primary Health Network CEOs committed to work with us to find solutions to poor access to mental health services.
- ▶ February 2016: Health CEOs and 10 local community health services, committed to lead mental health collective Impact project in Ipswich.
- ▶ November 2016: Health Minister Cameron Dick announced \$270,000 funding over 2 years for Mental Health Collective Impact project.

- ▶ May 2017, Collective Impact project launched.
- ▶ In August 2017: Four Mayoral candidates, including elected Mayor Antoniolli, committed to work with the Collective Impact Project.

Release Of Baby “Asha” And Family To Community, Spared From Being Deported To Nauru

- ▶ June 2015: Alliance leaders planned possible joint action around Welcome, including collective action if child faced return to risk.
- ▶ February 2016: Alliance, together with Getup, Refugee Action Collective and Qld Council of Unions, organised two-week, 24- hour vigil at Lady Cilento Hospital.
- ▶ February 2016: Government announced release of baby Asha and family into community detention, followed by all 168 asylum seekers facing return to Nauru.

Expanded Parking Concessions At Prince Charles Hospital; Becomes Model For Statewide Action.

- ▶ November 2016: Metro North Health and Hospital Service (HHS) committed to working with us to make hospital parking fairer at Prince Charles Hospital.
- ▶ May 2017: A trial of new expanded parking concessions started at the Prince Charles hospital, providing free or discounted parking to regular hospital visitors who can't afford the costs.
- ▶ July 2017: Health Minister Cameron Dick announced statewide hospital parking concessions package of \$7.5m, inspired by our solution.
- ▶ November 2017. ALP, LNP and Greens candidates for Stafford committed at public Assembly to work with us if elected on hospital parking costs, to ensure the continuation of our successful concessions trial.
- ▶ November 2017. HHS CEO committed to continue expanded hospital concessions.



We owe at least this much to future generations, from whom we have borrowed a fragile planet called Earth.



First Ever Logan City Council Funding For Public Transport, An Integrated State Government/ Council Plan, And Australia-First Demand Responsive Transport Trials.

- ▶ June 2015: The Logan City Council and Queensland Government MPs committed to join transport working group chaired by Community Alliance leaders.
- ▶ March 2016: At our Assembly, Four Logan Mayoral candidates committed \$1m+ a year in recurrent funding for public transport. Elected Mayor Luke Smith passes \$4m funding in his budget.
- ▶ March 2016: Logan City Council and State Government committed to our demand to develop an integrated transport plan.
- ▶ March 2016: At Logan Assembly, Linus Power MP committed Qld Government to Demand Responsive Transport trial.

- ▶ October 2017: Demand Response Public Transport trial begins in Logan.
- ▶ In three trial sites, Logan residents can dial a taxi for the cost of a public transport fare.

Statewide Commitment By Qld Premier To Recognise The Alliance, Work With Us On Our Care And Employment/Training Demands.

- ▶ March 29 2017: 340 Alliance leaders discerned to focus on Care and Employment/Training.
- ▶ May- August 2017: Concrete demands for change by State Gov on two campaigns decided through a research action process. August 30 2017: Premier committed to our asks at our Founding Assembly.
- ▶ November 2017: LNP Candidates committed to our asks, and Oppn Leader Tim Nicholls commits to work with us on Employment/Training asks.

<https://www.qldcommunityalliance.org/>

Sydney Alliance

External Organising achievements	Internal Organising achievements
<p>Housing: Put “inclusionary zoning” for affordable housing on the map and secured commitment of 5-10%+ on all new private developments. (Announced 2017, locked in 2018)</p> <p>Secured affordable housing commitments in all new Landcom and Urban Growth precincts. (Announced 2017, locked in 2018)</p>	<p>Housing: Moved the ALP, GRN and CDP policy on affordable housing and no-grounds eviction. (2016)</p> <p>Organised the largest, most diverse collective of civil society organisations (130) to work together on a joint platform on housing for the Greater Sydney Commission. (2016)</p>
<p>People Seeking Asylum:</p> <p>Secured with AS Interagency, transport concession travel for asylum seekers (announced 2015)</p> <p>Secured free access to TAFE for asylum seekers (2016), ironed out implementation barriers (Jan 2017).</p>	<p>People Seeking Asylum:</p> <p>Cross organisational action team with leadership from asylum seekers and refugees led the “Changing the Conversations” program, (2014-2017)</p> <p>Over 5500 people have participated in a face-to-face encounter with an asylum seeker, through their institution sharing their story through a “Changing the Conversations” Table Talk. 70% in Sutherland, St George or Western Sydney. (As of 2018)</p> <p>Over 22 asylum seekers and 12 refugees trained in story-telling and participating in CTC actions. (As of 2018)</p>
<p>Work/Life Balance:</p> <p>Stayed 2 year introduction of (2014) of retail trading on Boxing Day.</p> <p>Significant amendments ensuring workers right to refuse work on public holidays (2016).</p> <p>2018 work on Seasonal Workers Program with Craig Laundry and Sydney Pacific Community.</p>	<p>Work/Life Balance:</p> <p>Faith organisations took a united position on fairness in the economy for low-income families in relation to Penalty Rates. (2016)</p> <p>Unprecedented cooperation between civil society on retaining public holidays as ‘day of rest’. (2013-2017)</p>
<p>Transport</p> <p>Local wins on train station safety and accessibility in Western and Southern Sydney. (2012, 2013, 2015)</p> <p>Preservation of Opal Gold Concession levels (2015)</p>	<p>Transport:</p> <p>Integration of ‘Citizen standard’ for public transport access into Transport planning. 400:15:1 SCA2 (<i>Within 400m, 15 min frequency, 1 ticket, safe, clean, affordable & accessible</i>).</p>
<p>Social Inclusion</p> <p>Implementation of Aboriginal apprentice program from the local community at Harold Park Estate in Glebe (2 apprentices) 2012.</p>	<p>Social Inclusion:</p> <p>Olive Ribbon – combined Abrahamic faith and secular commitment to common city/values. Multicultural, interfaith and secular responses to key racist and anti-Semitic attacks.</p>

Internal Achievements (As of Nov 2017)

Training: over 2500 participants trained through staff/volunteer led Foundations Training. Over 110 youth graduates of internship program.

Take up of “relational organising” as a model across NGO, environment, union and faith sectors. Significant take up of “Organising Academy” model within partner orgs.

Over 1100 school students have participated in “community organising and student leadership” training across the Sydney Catholic Archdiocese, Broken Bay and Parramatta Diocese independent and systemic schools. 350 in NSW State schools.

Collaborative relationships:

A huge number of bilateral and multilateral relationships have sprung from the connections built in the Alliance as well as thousands of “internal wins” inside organisations thanks to Alliance training.

Collaborations such as *Muslim and Jewish women’s kitchen, NSW Cancer Council & NSW Nurses & Midwives joint policy forums, Refugee Welcome Committees in Bankstown following Syrian intake, Religious and environment organisations joint participation in People’s Climate March, Inner West bus access campaign, Tamil refugee engagement project at Northmead etc.*

Affordable & Renewable Power

Raised \$250k per year for 3 years to fund new work on affordable and renewable power in Western Sydney with a focus and organisers from Pacific, Assyrian-Armenian, Muslim, South-Asian, Vietnamese and Filipino community organisers.

Sydney Alliance partners that have a state-wide or national mandate:

Australian Union of Jewish Students
Arab Council Australia
Baptists NSW & ACT
Cancer Council of NSW
Catholics in Coalition for Justice &
Peace Climate Action Network
Australia National Tertiary Education
Union NSW NSW Jewish Board of
Deputies
NSW Council of Pacific Communities
Rail, Tram and Bus Union NSW
Branch Settlement Services
International Unions NSW
United Voice NSW Branch

Uniting
Uniting Church Synod of NSW-ACT
Vinnies NSW
Australian National Imams’ Council
NSW Conservation Council
Solar Citizens
Shelter NSW
Tenants Union
NSW
World Wildlife Fund Australia
<https://www.sydneyalliance.org.au/>

Sponsoring Committees

Sr Judy Donovan

(Judy Donovan, C.S.J., M.S.W., has been an organizer with the Industrial Areas Foundation for the last 20 years. The following reflection comes out of that experience.)

I received a call recently from a professor at a prestigious university asking if I would come speak with her graduate students. They were quite upset and she wondered if I, as an experienced organizer, would have any encouragement for them. Come to find out, a number of them had taken part in some local actions of a national economic protest movement. After many weeks of enthusiastic meetings and demonstrations, and at the cost of a great deal of time and even personal injury to some, the movement lost focus and energy; and over a midyear break, it fizzled. Now they were discouraged and wondering, "Is social change possible? Is the system rigged against change? Why should we even bother again?"

This is not an unfamiliar scenario for any of us committed to social change. We encounter many who feel like this and we have probably felt it ourselves. Good, dedicated, smart people try to act together, perhaps even achieving some of their goals, but over time, something falls apart and the movement ends. Sometimes their opponents get the better of them, or the money or the people power wanes; but just as often, internal tensions and challenges create ruptures in the effort before the opposition can even gear up. Questions arise like: "What is the strategy?"

Who is making decisions? How are roles determined? How are conflicts resolved? Can compromises be made, and if so, what kinds? Who is accountable to whom?" Unfortunately, these and similar types of questions can go unaddressed and tear well intended efforts asunder. Good intentions and good ideals can quickly dissolve into cynicism – and worse – apathy. The result can be even greater discouragement about engaging in public life than existed before these individuals started.

In *Shifting Involvements* (1982), activist economist Albert O. Hirshman notes that often, people don't realize how hard public life is going to be. They get discouraged and eventually abandon the effort.

Nobody tells you that participation can be frustrating,

and today this frustration can be compounded by a certain romantic expectation that the instant communication and rapid mobilization created by social media should also yield immediate success. When the high emotions and instant gratification of the flash mobilization passes and the hard work of organizing begins, many drop out.

This isn't just the problem of our "quick fix" age. It's been a challenge for change agents throughout history. One of the champions of social change from our not too distant past, Bayard Rustin (1964), even wrote about it in his classic and sadly prophetic essay, "From Protest to Politics." Mr. Rustin was a close associate of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the leading tactician of the civil rights movement. He organized the march on Washington. In this article, he speaks

to the then recent gains in civil rights legislation, but cautions the movement not to be satisfied with, "private, voluntary efforts." He urged that what was needed was *politics*. "A conscious bid for political power is being made, and in the course of that effort a tactical shift is being affected: direct action techniques are being subordinated to a strategy calling for the building of community organizations. What began as a protest movement is being challenged to translate itself into a political movement" In this provocative piece, Rustin posits that this transformation should and can be accomplished, and warns of the movement's demise if this challenge isn't taken seriously. Four short years later, Dr. King was assassinated, and the movement, which had not yet been able to heed Rustin's warning, began to unravel.

Passion, anger and even rage are not irrelevant or peripheral to the kind of politics that Rustin was talking about; they are powerful human experiences that tell us what we most care about, what we most grieve or fear losing, what most needs to change. Our stories of anger are actually key to long term sustainable organizing. But only if, as theologian Walter Brueggemann, points out in *Hopeful Imagination*, we can move "personal pain into public action." Rustin calls this moving from "protest to politics."

As in the past, so too in our own times, there are many powerful forces making decisions about and

shaping the future of our neighborhoods, cities and regions. Moving from protest to politics means bringing together those who have not had a place at the table into powerful organizations so they can have a voice in those decisions; or even, as one of our immigrant leaders proposed, “building a new table.”

The very un-hip organizing term for this is the *sponsoring committee*.

There are many ways to organize. The way that shapes my perspective is through what is called broad-based organizing. I have learned and practiced the art of broad-based organizing through the Industrial Areas Foundation for the last 20 years. The IAF was founded by Saul Alinsky, the father of what is today called community organizing, in the 1940's. Alinsky's theory of change was that the problems and challenges that poor and otherwise disenfranchised communities – the “have nots” - face are *institutional* in nature, and therefore, they require institutional solutions. He innovated the creation of “organizations of organizations,” (broad-based organizations) of diverse community institutions. These organizations build strong relationships within and across institutions, equip their members with leadership and organizing skills, and help them to act powerfully together on concrete issues facing their communities. A broad-based organization is affiliated with a network like the IAF for training and the development and supervision of professional organizers. However, it raises its own money, works on its own issues, and invests heavily in the development of its own people, who are its leaders.

The IAF has some 70 broad-based organizations in the US, Europe, Canada, and Australia; and there are countless other unaffiliated efforts inspired by Alinsky's writing and legacy. The oldest institutionally based IAF organizations, such as COPS in San Antonio, Texas, and BUILD in Baltimore, Maryland, have withstood many challenges and changes. Yet, they remain vital more than 40 years later, in part due to the culture of creating strong sponsoring committees, as well as these organizations' commitment to *ongoing disorganizing and reorganizing* in order to address new times and new realities.

Organizing is an art, not a science. If anyone tries to sell you on a “tool kit” for how to do it, run for the door, because you are either dealing with someone who is naïve or inexperienced or both. That said, over the decades, the guild of experienced IAF organizers

and leaders have sought to learn and share with each other from their successes and failures. What has emerged is a living body of knowledge that can inform and guide contemporary efforts. It is the living and lived experience of this guild that I share below.

1. What is a Sponsoring Committee?

A sponsoring committee is an ad hoc gathering of sponsors who are committed to creating a broad-based organization. These sponsors can be institutions (like unions, non-profits, faith communities, issue or interest groups, etc.) and/or individuals (like juridical or major decision makers from the above institutions, or others who are connected to potential sources of money or membership for the broad-based organization). The sponsoring committee is not the organization. Its job is to sponsor the *building* of the organization. Members of the sponsoring committee may even choose not to be involved in the eventual organization that forms, but they come together to incubate, credential, and build the effort. They do this in three ways.

First, the sponsoring committee raises the money for the organizing effort. They raise enough money to hire a full-time organizer, to pay for the basic infrastructure for operating the organization (office space, communications, travel, printing, mailing, insurance, accounting services, etc.), and to pay annual dues to the IAF for supervision, training and support. This total varies greatly but, for example, can range from \$150,000 for one organizer and minimal or in-kind infrastructure to \$350,000 for additional organizers, some support staff, and rented office space. Ideally, the sponsoring committee raises a two to three year budget. But it's about so much more than the budget.

The sponsoring committee raises *patient capital*; capital which allows the organizer and leaders to make a claim on the future, to be entrepreneurial *today* for results that will only come *later*. This allows them to exercise imagination, to experiment, to take calculated risks.

Second, the sponsoring committee credentials the organizing effort. When word gets out that an organizing effort is being created, potential allies and opponents alike will have important questions. “What are you doing? Who invited you to do this?” And perhaps, “Just *who* do you think you are?” It's critical that there be a wide range of known and respected community members and institutions who can answer those questions. Those who can imagine its potential

power not operating in their interest may attack the nascent effort. When that happens, it's important that local community insiders, and members of the sponsoring committee, are ready and willing to speak for or to credential the effort.

Thirdly, it is the sponsoring committee that invites others to join or engage with the organizing effort as eventual dues-paying members. Being known and respected members of the targeted community, they can discern about, approach and invite the right mix of diverse institutions, so that the organization starts out as broad and diverse as the community it seeks to organize. In this way, the sponsoring committee can connect the effort to potential organizing talent, as well as to potential members.

2. Why are sponsoring committees important to social change efforts?

First, sponsoring committees help build collective, relational power. Power operates through institutions. When the poor and disenfranchised do not have their own institutions through which to fight, they often give up or lose. Establishing a sponsoring committee, enables change agents to take the time to build a strong foundation of relationships and organizational infrastructure which supports the formation of a strong and sustainable organization that's able to *act*

- which is the very definition of power.

Second, a strong sponsoring committee can help combat the "culture of the expert," which often infects poor and marginalized communities. A certain learned helplessness can overcome these communities and make them susceptible to the lure of someone else's money and solutions. Allies from philanthropy, academia, think tanks, and consultants of all stripes may be useful and may have their place later in the life of an organization. However, they should be *kept in their place* during these initial stages of formation. Even when community members invite in an organizing network to help them build their organization, it is not the network's role to determine what issues the organization will take on. Neither is it the sponsoring committee's job. It is the people in the eventual dues-paying member institutions who organize to explore, research, and strategize about their own interests and how to put them into action.

Third, the sponsoring committee creates collective ownership for the effort. Rather than rushing into action, the sponsoring committee phase of the

organization's development allows the sponsors and the prospective members the time to go through the patient relationship-building, deliberate exchanges of differences, and initial experiences of tension and conflict necessary to build trust. This undergirds

strong organizations so that they can withstand future storms. The early civil rights leaders in Mississippi called this "spade work" (see chapter 8 in Charles

M. Payne's excellent history of the organizing tradition, *I've Got the Light of Freedom*, 1995). This phase of the effort helps put in place the habits and practices, which will provide the foundation for future decision-making and action. It's important that leaders understand that the "spade work" of building a sponsoring committee is organizing and is action; it is some of the most important and sophisticated organizing they will ever undertake.

3. How do you put a sponsoring committee together?

The process of creating a sponsoring committee is very particular to each distinct locale, time, and context. It's not a linear process, and many successful sponsoring committees experience false starts, cul-de-sacs, and wrong turns. It's a very creative and entrepreneurial effort involving hundreds of individual and small group conversations, lots of training sessions and workshops, an initial power analysis of the community, and the formation of a preliminary action plan. That said, three distinct phases are generally involved.

Phase I. Pre-Sponsoring Committee (6-18 months)

This phase usually begins either by someone(s) inside the target area inviting in a network or the network initiating the possibility of creating an organization in a particular area. Either way, organizers and/or local leaders begin seeking out individuals with whom to have initial conversations about their community, their interests, and the possibility of creating a broad-based organization. Keeping in mind the diversity and complexity of sometimes conflicting narratives in a community, the initiator of these conversations seeks to meet a large and diverse variety of individuals and institutions. The process of even thinking about who to approach and how to approach them comes out of a preliminary power analysis of the community.

After dozens to hundreds of individual and small group conversations (depending on the size and diversity of the turf involved), the initiator(s) and a

select group of initially interested parties then invite prospective sponsoring committee members to meet. At these gatherings (the nature of which needs to be creatively appropriate to each community), institutional leaders begin to build relationships, explore common and potentially conflicting interests, and start to explore together some important questions. “What are their communities experiencing and how are they currently addressing their challenges and opportunities? How do the values of their institutions inform the action they are or could be taking? What is broad-based organizing and what would it add to or how would it challenge their current ways of operating? Is there interest in exploring the creation of a broad based organization?”

This phase can include common social, worship or educational experiences, community walks or tours, training sessions and workshops, and even some preliminary action experiences, all targeted at building relational trust and the imagination for working together in a broad-based organization. During this phase, there is no locally paid organizer and there is no issue aside from: is there the will and means to build a broad-based power organization? If interested in proceeding, this group would raise the money necessary to bring in an organizer, on a contract basis, to work with the group in creating a sponsoring committee. The organizer and/or the key leaders involved would work with interested institutions to help them understand and discern about being part of the effort, identify key leaders, and form a preliminary organizing team. They could hold “house meetings” and/or a campaign of relational meetings to begin to identify potential leaders, as well as potential action issues.

Phase II. Sponsoring Committee (12-18 months)

A Sponsoring Committee is comprised of institutions invested in building a broad-based organization, and a non-profit 501(c)3 is established for this purpose. Members of the sponsoring committee make a financial contribution (not yet dues) and/or raise money to support the work of the sponsoring committee and to contract with a network to bring in a part-time organizer to work with them to build an organization. Key institutional leaders begin investing time into recruiting institutions, raising money for the first year’s budget, and engaging themselves and their leaders in leadership trainings and workshops in anticipation of the forming of an organizing effort. Leaders do an initial power analysis of their

community, engage in a campaign of house meetings and/or individual meetings, and begin to research actions to formulate an action agenda for public business.

This phase can involve some carefully chosen public action as long as it doesn’t distract the sponsoring committee from the primary work of building a power organization. As this happens, the best and busiest of local institutional leaders will be assessing if this is worth their time, effort, and money. The future of the project rests on their decision! It’s critical that the organizers and key local leaders are deeply curious about and respectful of the self-interest of potential partners, and that they openly encourage these individuals to pursue those interests. This self-interest will vary greatly and will change over time, but it must be discovered and encouraged.

Many of the common reasons for important potential members to decide to invest in the effort have nothing to do with any particular issue, but often revolve around who else is at the table; the quality of leadership development that is offered; the reputation, professionalism and track record of the network they’ve invited in to help them; or most important of all, the opportunity to become powerful players in the decisions that affect their communities, regardless of the issue at hand. This phase of the effort is very fluid, with individuals and institutions moving in and out of the process. Organizers and key leaders must have a high tolerance for ambiguity, an acceptance of the necessary instability, and a calm and confident nature.

At some point, the group needs to decide together if they are going to move forward. If they do so, they move into founding the organization.

Phase III. Founding an Organization (6 -9 months)

Here, the leaders of the sponsoring committee begin to formalize some of the more ad hoc structures that have operated thus far. They hire a full-time organizer, establishing leadership structures that are flexible enough to allow for dynamic leadership and yet structured enough to guarantee clear decision-making and accountability. They create initial legal and fiscal oversight structures, and they establish a non-profit 501(c)3 or 4. Then, they organize a founding convention. This is the first public action of the organization, involving large delegations from every founding member institution, groups of attendees from potential member organizations, public officials, the media, and other potential allies. At the founding

convention, leadership structures are ratified, dues commitments are made, and a preliminary issues agenda and action plan are presented publically for the first time. With the founding convention, the organization is publically launched and credentialed for public business. The sponsoring committee 501(c)3 can be kept in existence in case it is needed in the future.

4. Some Cautions

Some tensions and conflicts seem constitutive to the process of creating a sponsoring committee and launching a new organization. Here are a few to keep in mind.

You will find two extremes among any group: the process people and the activists. Most of us are a mix of the two, with one tending to dominate the other. Each group drives the other mad. The *process* people, if left unchecked, will drain all the energy from the room, and you'll be left with well-intended but tiresome bureaucrats. If the *activists* are allowed to dominate, their stridency and intolerance for the work of building relationships will leave the group shallow and thin. Acknowledge this tension with good humor, and put leaders who can keep these extremes in check at the center of the effort.

In today's virtual culture, many struggle with or have little understanding of the value of an *institution*, much less an *institutional strategy*. Even long-standing congregations, non-profits, unions, and other participating organizations can be in a crisis of meaning or courage when it comes to the potential power residing in their values, their legacy, their membership, and even the very geographic turf they hold. Some pre-institutional organizing may be necessary to re-introduce them to the social mandate within their own tradition and to re-stir their imagination about the difference they could make were they to take themselves seriously.

Once local leaders start to share common concerns and begin to imagine actually doing something, they will want to move into action right away. Many poor and disenfranchised communities are also crisis driven and no doubt there will be urgent situations that arise during the time it can take to found a powerful organization. While it can be strategic and formative to take the group into some action,

it is critical that the focus remain on building the organization. This requires a great deal of internal trust and what we call "cold anger": the kind of anger and passion for change that has the maturity and patience to build a strong foundation first.

During the sponsoring committee phase, it is not the job of the group to decide what issues the future organization will take on. This is important for two reasons. First, if the sponsoring committee allows the effort to be overly identified with particular issues areas, those with other interests will conclude the organization is not for them and will opt out. Second, the organization that will emerge will not be centered on any one issue or even set of issues. It is founded on public relationships and the desire for a powerful vehicle through which people can act on a variety of issues over time. The organization is built for power, not for issues. The mantra of the sponsoring committee is "*power before program.*"

When the effort moves from sponsoring committee to founding convention, it is both at its most powerful and also at its most vulnerable. The organization and its leadership have not yet been tested and are, in fact, not yet built. The founding convention credentials the organization for public work, but the first order of business is to build the organization beyond its initial members. It can do this through action, but it must be attentive to the many individuals and institutions who remained outside the sponsoring committee phase, waiting to see what would emerge. If it looks like the organization is a closed clique with fixed leadership and a set agenda, they won't see a place for their interests or institution and they'll turn away. It's important that the new organization be inviting of and open to the new energy, new leaders, new partners, and the inevitable creative disruption that will emerge in every phase of its future.

To misquote our 42nd president, I "It's the *relationships*, stupid!" No matter how big, smart, successful or recognized an organization may become, it is ultimately the relationships between leaders and their institutions that holds it together. Particularly during and after the sponsoring committee phase, it's critical that training sessions, internal action, public actions, and issues work have at their center the building and strengthening of public relationships. This is the glue that will see the organization through internal turmoil and external

threats. As an organization grows and matures in public confidence and relational trust, it will be able to take on more complex and controversial issues.

If you're thinking, "Wow, all that sounds like a lot of work," you are right! And building a sponsoring committee isn't appropriate for every strategy for change. But it is essential work for creating an organization that can survive, thrive, adapt and grow over decades. My mentor Ernesto Cortes, Jr. is fond of quoting physicist Fredrick Dyson who says that having the right timeline matters. For the CEO, it's the quarterly statement. For the bureaucrat, it's the budget cycle. For the politician, it's the next

election. But for the grandparent, it's a generation. Those of us committed to social change have to have the perspective of a grandparent. Our work is generational. When done right, we are privileged to help build organizations that outlive the comings and goings of politicians, pastors, executives, and organizers alike by becoming a living and powerful part of the culture of how a community operates.

Only then, will we have taken up Rustin's timely and prophetic challenge to move from *protest* to *politics*.

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