Organizing Training Part II: Community Relationship Building

Strategies for Deepening Trust and Collaboration

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Introductions

- Your Name
- Your Role
- ICEBREAKER

- **Recognize the burden people with marginalized identities endure** and remember they have the right to not answer your questions.
- **Growth mindset** and recognize every experience is an opportunity to learn.
- **Move up/ Move Back**
- **Stay Engaged** remain emotionally, intellectually and social involved
- **Practice “both/and” thinking**
- **Welcome discomfort** as an opportunity for learning and growth
- **Know your intent, own your impact**
- **What’s said here stays here, what’s learned here leaves here**
- **Embrace non-closure**
- **Shared responsibility for interrupting harmful dynamics** and calling each other in to the agreements

Agenda:

- Overview of Relationship Building in Organizing
- Deepening & Sustaining Long-Term Partnerships With Practical Tools
- Reflection & Knowledge Sharing
- Next Steps

Goals & Outcomes of Training:

1. Share lessons from the Living Reference Document—a resource capturing collective knowledge and best practices.

2. Facilitate a group discussion to exchange real-world experiences and challenges.

3. Provide tools for navigating relationships authentically and centering community needs.

Relationship Building Foundations

What is Community Relationship Building?

Definition:
The process of fostering trust, respect, and collaboration between organizers and community members.

Why It's Critical:
Strengthens grassroots movements
Ensures initiatives are community-led and sustainable

Key Principles for Building Relationships

1. Equity: Engage communities as equal partners.
2. Trust: Build it through consistency and transparency.
3. Empathy: Understand the lived experiences of community members.
4. Humility: Acknowledge when you don't have all the answers.

Part Two:

Deepening & Sustaining Connections

Deepening Relationships: Key Strategies

1. **Active Listening:** Focus on understanding, not responding.
2. **Co-Creation:** Work with the community to design solutions together.
3. **Transparency:** Be honest about what you can and cannot offer.
4. **Consistency:** Show up regularly and follow through on commitments.

Practical Tools for Deepening Relationships

1. **Community Profiles:**
   Create profiles of key leaders and stakeholders to understand their interests, values, and needs.
2. **Regular Check-Ins:**
   Schedule quarterly updates with partners via email, calls, or in-person meetings.
3. **Shared Spaces:**
   Establish a neutral, welcoming location for collaboration.

Sustaining Long-Term Partnerships

Key Practices:

1. **Reciprocal Benefits:** Ensure both sides gain from the partnership.
2. **Regular Evaluation:** Assess the relationship and adapt as needed.
3. **Celebrate Milestones:** Acknowledge achievements and progress.

Part Three:

Common Challenges & Practical Tools

Common Challenges and How to Address Them

1. **Mistrust of external organizations**
   Prioritize listening and let the community lead.
2. **Limited Resources:**
   Be transparent about limitations and seek creative solutions together.
3. **Burnout in relationships:**
   Encourage breaks, self-care, and equitable distribution of work.

Practical Tools for Overcoming Challenges

1. Conflict Resolution Framework: Listen, Acknowledge, Reflect, Solve.
2. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): Clearly outline shared goals and responsibilities.
3. Community-Led Evaluations: Gather feedback on what's working and what's not.

Breakout Rooms (15 minutes):

- Share a meaningful or challenging community relationship experience with your partner.
- Work together to identify actionable strategies for handling challenges or deepening the connection.
- We'll come back and share out

Part Four:

Reflection & Knowledge Sharing

Interactive Activity: Relationship Mapping

1. Draw a map of your community relationships.
2. Identify key stakeholders, gaps, and opportunities for deeper connections.

Goal: Visualize your network and strategize next steps.

Next Steps

1. Implement one tool or strategy discussed today.
2. Schedule a check-in with an existing partner.
3. Plan a relationship mapping session with your team.