

Grassroots Movements

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Discussion: What is a grassroots movement?

Grassroots organizing's power is in the sense of justice about an issue and the power of ordinary folks to influence people in powerful positions, whose power always depends on cooperation from many, many people. Its power is not of money, issue expertise, or relationships to decision-makers.

Grassroots organizing works to increase the capacity of a social movement by training new volunteer leaders and by involving new volunteer activists. Leadership development helps to increase the size of the movement and to increase its power. Leaders learn a variety of skills, such as developing flyers, running meetings, writing letters-to-the-editor, and about the issue, whether it be about racial justice, pro-life campaigns, affordable housing, clean air, or lower taxes. Eventually leaders learn how to be organizers: they learn how to pick an issue, run a campaign, and how to train new leaders.

Since the power of grassroots organizing is in ordinary people, it seeks to mobilize large numbers of people. An activist group of five people may be able to reach 5,000 people in a week by putting up posters, sending e-mails, or making phone calls. Larger organizations can reach hundreds of thousands or even millions people.

Grassroots organizing creates democracy. By engaging ordinary people in its campaigns, it works from the bottom up to make its decisions. It does this by working with its constituency to determine issues, strategies, and tactics, and finding its volunteer leadership from the folks it is organizing

How do they organize?

Grassroots organize and lobby through procedures including:

- door-to-door, also known as canvassing
- phone banking
- house parties
- meetings
- putting up posters
- talking with pedestrians on the street (often involving informational clipboards)
- gathering signatures for petitions
- setting up information tables
- raising money from many small donors for political advertising or campaigns
- organizing large demonstrations
- asking individuals to submit opinions to media outlets and government officials

- get out the vote activities which includes the practices of reminding people to vote and/or transporting them to polling places.

Activity #3: Grassroots Campaigning

Research a grassroots campaign from the list provided. Prepare one PowerPoint slide highlighting the groups' purpose, mission statement, members, foundation, current work, etc.?

Example:

What	Who	How
Grassroots Organizing	The people who care about the issue come together to create solutions.	Ten activists band together and put together a rally and a letter-writing campaign to increase state transit funding by 10%.

Further Examples of Real Life Grassroots Campaigns

- [Animal Liberation Front](#)
- [Alaska Wildlife Alliance](#)
- [Action Without Borders](#) (formerly Contact Center Network).

- [Alan Shawn Feinstein World Hunger Program.](#)
- [The Alliance for National Renewal \(ANR\)](#)
- [Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now \(ACORN\).](#)
- [Bread for the World.](#)
- [Breast Cancer Action](#)
- [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.](#)
- [Congressional Hunger Center](#)
- [Critical Mass](#)
- [Defenders of Wildlife](#)
- [Doonesbury Town Hall](#)
- [Earth Island Institute](#)
- [Earth First](#)
- [Earth Liberation Front](#)
- [The Electronic Policy Network.](#)
- [The Elias Fund](#)
- [FarmFolk/CityFolk Society \(Canada\).](#)
- [500 Mile Walk to Call Off Hunger.](#)
- [Food First - Institute for Food and Development Policy.](#)
- [Food For The Hungry.](#)
- [Food Industry Crusade Against Hunger.](#)
- [Freedom From Hunger.](#)
- [Food Not Bombs](#)
- [Garbage Bag Gardening.](#)
- [Grassroots Campaigns, Inc.](#)
- [Greenpeace](#)
- [The Harry Chapin Foundation.](#)
- [The Hunger and Poverty Page \(Australia\).](#)
- [The Hunger Project.](#)
- [HungerWeb.](#)
- [INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence \(US\).](#)
- [Industrial Workers of the World \(IWW\)](#)
- [Institute for Research on Poverty \(IRP\).](#)
- [Kids Can Make a difference \(KIDS\).](#)
- [Mazon: A Jewish Response to Hunger.](#)
- [Meta-Index for Non-Profit Organizations.](#)
- [National Center for Children in Poverty.](#)
- [National Coalition for the Homeless.](#)
- [Philanthropy News Network.](#)
- [Presbyterian Church Hunger Program.](#)
- [Rainforest Action Network](#)
- [Research Forum on Children, Families, and the New Federalism.](#)
- [RESULTS.](#)
- [The School-Age Child Care Project \(SAC\) at the Center for Research on Women at Wellesley College and its MOST Initiative.](#)
- [Second Harvest Online.](#)
- [Share Our Strength \(SOS\).](#)
- [The Time Dollar Institute.](#)
- [The Union of International\(UIA\).](#)
- [Unitarian Service Committee of Canada \(USC-Canada\).](#)
- [Volunteers of America.](#)
- [WebActive.](#)
- [World Hunger Year.](#)
- [World SHARE.](#)
- [Defective By Design](#)
- [Angel Flight New England.](#)

- [California Emergency Foodlink](#) (CEFL).
- [The Chekhov Theatre Ensemble](#) (New York).
- [Community Farm Alliance](#) (Kentucky).
- [Community Food Bank of New Jersey](#).
- [D.C. Central Kitchen](#).
- [Feed My People, St. Louis](#).
- [54 Ways You Can Help The Homeless](#).
- [Focus: Hope, Detroit](#).
- [Food Runners](#).
- [Iowans for Sensible Priorities](#).
- [The Learning Logic Foundation](#)'s Think Tank Online and its Donate Computers to Kids Who Tutor program.
- [National Rifle Association](#).
- [North Carolina Child Advocacy Institute](#).
- [Northern Plains Resource Council](#), Billings, Montana
- [Ohio Citizen Action](#), Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati.
- [Progressive Maryland](#)
- [Southwestern Virginia Second Harvest Food Bank](#).
- [Sierra Club](#).
- [SHARE New England](#).
- [SHARE Southern California](#).
- [SHARE Vermont](#).
- [St. Andrew's Society of Charleston, South Carolina](#).
- [The Tibetan Photo Project](#).
- [The Education and Employment Ministry](#) (TEEM).
- [Veggies](#) (Catering Campaign, Nottingham, UK).