



Malik's Favorite Definition of Community Organizing

Community Organizing is **the process of building power** through involving a constituency (specific groups of people) in identifying problems they share and the solutions to those problems that they desire; identifying the people and the structures that can make solutions possible, enlisting those targets in the effort through negotiation and using pressure and confrontation when needed; and building an institution that is democratically controlled by the constituency that can develop the capacity to take on further problems and that are the will and power of the group. (Midwest Academy 2010)

INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

WINNING ISSUES

Organizing isn't just about protesting what is wrong and unjust, organizing also requires demanding solutions and holding decision makers accountable for the changes the community seeks. To successfully win, organizers build a base, prioritize issues, conduct power analysis, take action, negotiate and evaluate during and at the end of a campaign.

SYSTEMS CHANGE

Organizers look beneath the surface beyond the symptoms of social problems to reveal the systemic root causes that fuel injustice in order to create a more just and equitable society. Employing a critical systems framework requires looking at the history, narratives, institutions, and policies that lead to imbalances in wealth and power and racism that too often determine who-owns-what and who-lives-where.

REPRESENTATIVE LEADERSHIP

Leadership Development is a critical component of community organizing because power ultimately lies in the hands of those in community who are willing to take action. In organizing for racial justice and equity at the neighborhood level, it is critical that people of color are in positions of leadership in local vehicles for organizing, including neighborhood organizations.

RESEARCH JUSTICE

Research Justice is critical to community organizing because it builds power by positioning communities as experts, and reclaim, own and wield all forms of knowledge and information. With strategic support, the knowledge and information generated by these communities can be used as political leverage to advance their own agendas for change. (Datacenter.org)