

Dedication

If this guide were to perchance fall into the hands of a budding student environmental or social justice activist wannabe, may you use it wisely and join in with millions of students of the past, present, and future in fighting for a a healthy planet and a just society free from all forms of oppression.

Quick Dirty Guide to Organizing

Join or form a group.
Choose an issue.
Launch a campaign.
Empower yourself and your fellow students.
Publicize everything.
Be funny.
Recruit, recruit, recruit.
Fight the Power.
WIN! (repeat until we achieve utopia)
Dance on the ruins of multi-national corporations.

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Chapter 1 – We’re the Generation of Change!

*If we are said to seek the unattainable let it be known
that we do so to avoid the unimaginable.*

(Students for a Democratic Society, Port Huron Statement, 1962)

But there is *Environmental Injustice*...

The globe is warming, the ozone hole is growing, cancer rates are skyrocketing, new chemicals of unknown toxicity are being invented monthly, humans are being cloned, our food is genetically engineered, our topsoil is eroding, corporate-driven unsustainable economic growth is demanding greater resource extraction, hormones are being added to our milk, and animals and plants are experiencing unprecedented rates of extinction as countless ecosystems are destroyed. The gap between rich and poor is growing increasingly obscene. Multi-national corporations, aided by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, are drawing up a new international order that would give them all the rights (like the ‘rights’ to pollute and smash unions) and leave the world’s inhabitants with none. The rich control our politicians, own the media, and are even taking over our schools. In the name of “justice” and “democracy,” governments wage wars, destroying people and the planet. We live in a time of environmental injustice.

Despite the efforts of the Civil Rights, Feminist, and Queer movements, racism, sexism, and heterosexism still ravage our society. People are oppressed, and ultimately dying, because of their race, gender, class, and sexual orientation. The traditional environmental movement has been slow in recognizing this fact and has too often reflected the priorities of its largely white, middle-class constituency. As a result, the movement has focused much of its energy on problems in the wilderness while neglecting those of the city, both of which demand our attention. We can do better.

But our Environmental Group *Sucks*...

So there is environmental injustice, and many of us are aware of it. Unfortunately it is one thing to recognize that something needs to happen, and another to actually organize people to take action. There are millions of young folks who care about the environment but who aren’t involved in organizations working to end ecological destruction. Many who attend schools without an environmental club do not feel they have enough experience to start an organization. Many existing environmental groups face reoccurring problems of low membership, high turnover, domination by a few people who do most of the work, ineffective meetings, and lack of a well-planned campaign; as a result they end up having little impact on other students – let alone on the environment.

But it doesn’t have to be that way. Young people can (and must!) learn to become effective organizers for environmental justice. By networking with one another, and sharing resources, skills, and analysis, we can help to bring about radical change in our society. And that’s what this guide is about. Read on!

SEAC's Founding

The first seeds of SEAC (pronounced 'seek') were planted in the fall of 1988 after a group of students from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill placed an ad in Greenpeace magazine inviting other students to join them in the fight to save the planet. The enthusiastic response to that ad emboldened the Chapel Hill group, and in early 1989 they set about to organize Threshold, SEAC's first national student environmental conference.

Many people, though, said we were aiming too high. The critics said we couldn't possibly do something so big. However, we persevered and worked even harder. We believed there could be nothing more important that we could possibly do. Through untiring commitment, good luck, and the power of an idea whose time had come, we succeeded beyond our wildest dreams.

On October 27-29, 1989, more than 1700 students from 43 states and over 225 schools came to Chapel Hill to participate in Threshold. It was an astounding turnout. On the first night, the jam packed Memorial Hall auditorium buzzed with excitement for SEAC had come to life and with it a new national student environmental movement was born. The conference had given SEAC the launch pad it needed to become a national organization. On that weekend many student environmentalists from around the nation also met each other for the very first time, talked grassroots organizing strategy, and voted for SEAC's first national campaign: an all out effort to save America's remaining old-growth forests and to reform the U.S. Forest Service.

Threshold sparked tremendous energy. Just two weeks afterward, students at 50 schools coordinated a nationwide day of action demanding that our universities and schools become models of environmental sustainability. Three months after the conference, students across the country organized marches on their state capitols calling on our politicians to immediately adopt policies which would conserve, preserve and restore our national forest heritage. Five months later, students from across the nation descended on our nation's capitol to participate in a SEAC rally calling for strong national clean air laws.

When we came together for Catalyst in Champaign, Illinois (SEAC's second national environmental conference held just one year after Threshold) more than 7,000 students from all 50 states and eleven countries were there to celebrate and take SEAC into the environmental decade of the 1990s.

By Jimmy Langman, Threshold chairperson.

SEAC is a student and youth run national network of progressive organizations and individuals whose aim is to uproot environmental injustices through action and education. We define the environment to include the physical, economic, political, and cultural conditions in which we live. By challenging the power structure which threatens these conditions, students in SEAC work to create progressive social change on both the local and global levels.
(SEAC's Mission Statement)

SEAC's History

Numerous regions began corporate accountability campaigns around issues like British Petroleum's pollution in Ohio and Coors' destruction of rivers in Colorado. The momentum of Catalyst also carried into regional and state gatherings around the country. Then in January of 1991 the US went to war with Iraq. Many SEACers organized against the war and SEAC launched an Energy Independence Campaign to coincide with the anti-war effort and its corporate accountability campaign.

In the summer of 1991 SEAC held its 2nd National Council Meeting. At that meeting, the organization decided to no longer organize national campaigns and launched two new projects, the Common Ground conference (attended by 2500 and located in Boulder Colorado), and the Action for Solidarity, Equality, Environment and Development (A SEED), an international effort of numerous youth organizations to impact the Earth Summit in Rio. SEAC also started a field-organizing program.

A SEED grew into SEAC's largest single project. There was a speaker's tour with educational events at over 120 campuses. There was a weekend of conferences in three states and 23 countries networked by email and fax to discuss the issues. In March 1992, SEAC organized a series of demonstrations at the United Nations in New York. In June, one of the three official observers on the U.S. Delegation to the Rio Earth Summit, and the only student, was a SEACer. In Rio, A SEED organized more actions, and students on four continents, including SEACers in the US, went on a hunger strike. In the end, SEAC became part of network of student groups in 62 countries struggling at the grassroots for environmental and social justice.

During our peak in 1991-92, SEAC had 13 people on its full-time staff: five in the national office; five working on A SEED and three field organizers. In 1992, SEAC's budget fell rapidly and the staff was cut to five people. At the July National Council meeting, the People of Color Caucus (POCC) demanded and received equal representation on SEAC's National Council. During the fall, the SEAC office continued SEAC's new strategy of focusing on supporting the development of local coalitions. The office was moved to a larger space in Chapel Hill, and the administrative capacity was increased. In 1993, SEAC organized against the North American Free Trade Agreement, started a weekend Training Program in the summer, and joined the Free Burma movement in the fall. In 1994, SEAC launched its Environmental Justice Initiative (EJI). The EJI was a project of the POCC and was geared toward educating and empowering youth and high school students. Part of the EJI evolved into *Youth United for Community Action* and became its own organization in 1996. The POCC also completed an Environmental Justice Organizing Guide (EJOG) in 1996.

It hasn't always been easy – and we're going to be honest about it. While SEAC initially went through a phase of exponential growth, from early on the organization has had to deal with high turnover and a highly fluctuating funding base (due to the nature of foundation funding). For the first phase of its history, SEAC was able to

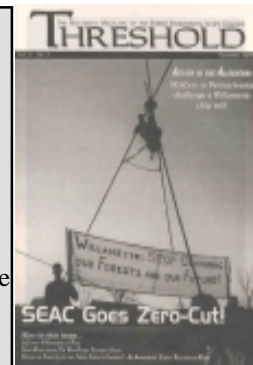
maintain a national office with between five and thirteen staff members. Unfortunately in the summer of 1996, a decision that was made due to a lack of communication caused a lot of problems for SEAC. Its Coordinating Committee decided to cut a program that held activist training sessions at different schools. Their primary intent was to save money, but they did not know that some of the organization's future income (foundation grants) was tied to the program. Ultimately SEAC lost all of its staff, almost all of its funding, closed the national office, and reduced the size and frequency of Threshold, its magazine. However, with the help of courageous volunteers, SEAC was rebuilt! We've reopened our office, staffed it, organized on the regional level, and are regularly updating our materials (like this organizing guide).

SEAC Today

But what are SEAC's values and current programs? SEAC promotes environmentalism in a social context, working to develop people's understanding that environmental degradation and social inequality are deeply connected. We are not going to be able to stop our environmental crisis without addressing other social ills such as poverty, war, racism, sexism, heterosexism, and unrestrained greed. In other words, if the environmental movement is going to be successful, it must become a global civil rights movement!

SEAC serves as a resource to grassroots youth groups all over the country, providing them with information, resources, and action alerts on specific campaigns (ranging from forest protection to global warming to corporate globalization). We help them network with other groups in the same region with similar interests so they can work together. SEAC also provides a unified student voice on environmental issues by conducting national campaigns. For instance, in February 1990 we held Marches for Environmental Justice simultaneously in 34 state capitals, as well as a national Lobby Day for Clean Air in Washington, DC. Our most recent national campaigns include Free Burma and opposing the World Trade Organization. Our current national campaigns include the "Tampaction Campaign," "Youth power Shift," and "Militarism and the Environment." Other campaigns carried out by SEACers all over the country include:

- Greening your campus.
- Stopping logging in National Forests.
- Opposing sweatshops.
- Support for peace with Iraq and opposition to the so-called "war on terrorism."
- Stopping the Mt. Graham telescope project.
- Procurement and sustainable purchasing policies.
- Corporate divestment campaigns.
- Opposing unjust globalization including the Free Trade Area of the Americas, World Bank, and IMF.
- Defeating chip mills.



SEAC aims to be grassroots and democratic. We don't want to be a top-down apparatus telling people what to do. In many ways, we're more of a network than anything else. We bring students together to share ideas, tactics, and support. All of our campaigns and programs are decided upon democratically, and we want to hear everyone's ideas and criticisms. But democracy only works when everyone participates. So PLEASE keep in touch with your Regional, State or Area Coordinator, the National Office, your National Council Reps, and all of your friends. Empower yourself by attending a National Council meeting. Make it your organization!

Join the Movement!

SEAC didn't start just because the students at UNC Chapel Hill were so amazing. It took many groups working together. And SEAC wouldn't exist today without the thousands of individuals and groups whose daily activity is the life-blood of the student environmental movement. Some participants have had years of experience in environmental organizing, whereas others simply have their hearts in the right place and are ready to learn. Movements cannot survive without people, and this movement (and planet) needs YOU. This organizing guide is only possible due to the contributions of SEACers and SEAC alumni from across the U.S. So join SEAC. And kick us some membership dues if you can afford it. We don't have a heck of a lot of money, and we really rely upon contributions from the grassroots to sustain our activities.

SEAC's Organizational Principles

1. Fight environmental degradation.
2. Recognize the impact of the environment on human individuals and communities.
3. Support human rights.
4. Support animal rights.
5. Demand corporate responsibility.
6. Fight class inequalities.
7. Fight racism.
8. Fight sexism.
9. Fight homophobia and heterosexism.
10. Fight imperialism and militarism.
11. Have a diverse membership.
12. Develop an activist rather than a volunteer approach.
13. Link our issues to local, community concerns.
14. SEAC National exists to empower the grassroots through training and education. We view national campaigns as one of the tools to accomplish these goals.

In this guide, we'll try to share our collective wisdom on how to be an effective environmental activist—how to organize your group, how to keep it going, and how to make real progress on issues that are important to us all. While there is no perfect method that fits every situation, these are things that have helped us and we hope they help you. In the rest of this guide, we'll show you how to start a group, structure it, hold successful meetings, empower your members, choose an issue, launch a campaign(s), develop your analysis, mobilize students, change yourself and your friends, and win progressive social change.

CHAPTER 2 – Starting or Reviving a Group

Organizing is the most important way that we as environmentalists are ultimately going to create positive change. All other progressive movements in the past have made changes in our society by organizing: the labor movement, the civil rights movement, the antiwar movement, etc. Like these movements, we can be many times more powerful together than we are as individuals.

So what is organizing? The Midwest Academy says that organizing is “overwhelmingly about personal relationships. It is about changing the world and changing how individuals act together. The relationships organizers develop are their most important resource and forming relationships their most important talent.” We like this definition, so let’s start from there...

Knowing Your School and Community

The first step is to become familiar with your community. Organizing should be rooted in a place, and our work should be primarily about defending the places, people, and other living things that we love. As such, there are a number of initial questions you want to answer:

- ☐ What are the major environmental and social problems in your school or community?
- ☐ What other activist groups exist on campus or in your community? (get to know them, and their leadership)
- ☐ Is there important work that needs to be done in your community, but is not already happening; work that you think others would be willing to join you in?
- ☐ What support can the already-existing groups give to this work, or will your work give to them?
- ☐ How do other groups organize?
- ☐ Who are the campus and community leaders?
- ☐ How do you “officially” register a new group on your campus?
- ☐ Is there money for campus groups?
- ☐ How do you get access to these funds?
- ☐ Do you need a faculty sponsor?
- ☐ How do you reserve rooms to meet?
- ☐ Where do people gather?

Often there is a campus activities office, or student government offices, which will help you answer some of these questions, but don’t get bogged down in the bureaucracy. You will be learning about your school all year, so don’t let a lack of information about official campus policy stop you from organizing the group.



Initial Planning

You may want to get a small group of people together to help you plan a kick-off meeting. Use word of mouth and small-scale advertising to find out who might be interested in helping.

It is important not to let this planning group become a “clique.” Also, be sure not to set any policies or positions in stone until a larger group can vote on it. It may become very difficult to get other people to join and be active in your group if they sense a lack of democracy and feel as though everything has already been decided upon.

Outreach

Outreach is one of the most basic tasks in organizing. You should always be trying to bring new people into the group. Remember, how and where you reach out to people will determine the kind of group you will create. If you only talk to white students, or if all of the people in the planning group are men, the group will lack diversity. Below is a simple plan for outreach

1) Answer the question: Why would someone want to join this group? (It may be different for different people, but the answer should be a part of all the outreach you do.)

2) General Publicity: You want to broadcast far and wide that a group is forming or reforming. There are a plethora of different ways to do general publicity. Publicity efforts can include: e-mails to individuals and listservs, posters, making announcements in your classes, leaflets, table tents (folded leaflets on cafeteria tables), chalking the sidewalk or blackboards, banners, ads or articles in the campus newspaper, public service announcements on the campus radio or television station, notice in a daily bulletin, bathroom graffiti, skywriting, ESP, blaring your message out over a bullhorn at lunch, etc. You may want to set up a table in the student union, cafeteria or other places where people gather. Have pens and paper out for people to sign up with their contact information. [Hint: put your name on the list - no one likes to be “first.”] In general, the more people hear about your group, the more likely they are to get involved, so try lots of different strategies for publicity. Remember to put the time and place of your kick-off meeting on everything, as well as contact information in case people have further questions.

3) Lists: Develop a list of interested people. Only a fraction of the list will probably be active members, but it’s good to keep as many people informed about your work as possible. Get in one-on-one contact with the people on your list to remind them about the kick-off meeting and learn about why they are interested in the issues. Personal contact is almost always the most effective means of outreach, but if you don’t have lots of time, a small reminder via email or on someone’s answering machine is better than nothing.



4) Personal Contact: Make one-on-one contact with the people on your lists to remind them about the kick-off meeting and learn about why they are interested in the issues. You can also go to their dorm rooms (if you are at a school with dorms.) or eat lunch with them. Personal contact is more effective than e-mails, but if you don't have the time, a small reminder is better than nothing.

Kick-Off Meeting

The Kick-Off meeting or event is a good way to get many of the contacts that you have been gathering directly involved and talking to one another. It should only take a few weeks to organize. The goal of the kick-off meeting is to get people interested in the group that you are forming or the work that you will be doing. Your event should be fun, informative, and participatory. To organize a successful kick-off meeting, you might want to first have a pre-kick-off meeting with the group's most active members.

The first step is to take care of logistics. Pick a time when the most people are able to come. Don't panic though—there is no perfect time when everyone is going to be available. Try to pick a time that can stay the same each week. Set a goal for how many people you want at your meeting (be ambitious), then reserve a room that you think will be a little too small. When you pack a room it creates an incredible sense of excitement, and there is nothing uglier than lots of empty chairs at a kick-off meeting. Also, try to find a room with movable chairs so you can sit in a circle. Make sure that the most active leaders do not all sit together.



If possible, get food for your meeting. That will keep everyone in a good mood and willing to stick around for awhile. Another crowd-pleaser is to start and end roughly on time. You want to assure people that the group is going to be a good use of their time.

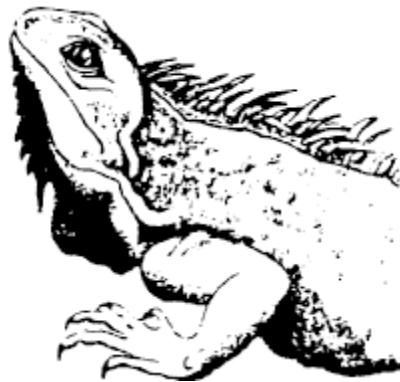
During this first meeting, and if the size of the group permits, it's important for everyone to give introductions. Go around the room and get people's names and favorite food, or some other sort of icebreaker like why they came. Immediate, friendly introductions are very important - if people feel uncomfortable they won't come back. It's a good idea to start all meetings by having people go around the circle and introduce themselves or just "check-in" with how they are feeling. Also make sure to pass around a sheet to collect everybody's name, phone number and email.

One of the group's active members should give a brief introduction to the group. New groups need to emphasize that a group is what people make of it and to encourage people to suggest projects. If your group has been working on several things, each working committee could do a short presentation on what it has been doing and what it hopes to do. This should take only a few minutes of the overall meeting. It's also a good idea to include an educational component in your meetings and events. Many people who are attending for the first time won't know very much about the particular issues that you are working on, or see an immediate reason why they should get involved. Don't be afraid to tell people the truth about what's going on, even if the truth is that our planet is being destroyed, its people are being oppressed, and our democracy is being plundered. But also keep in mind that people want to be inspired and to feel a sense of hope. And there's almost always as much reason to feel hopeful and inspired as there is to feel angry and depressed.

It is a good idea to explain what SEAC is about and present SEAC's principles. New students are often not familiar with the many possibilities of issue campaigns that can be worked on. Explain the difference between service projects and issue campaigns (see Chapter 4) so that new students understand that your group is about making lasting change. If your group was active last semester, explain some of the history of what campaigns the group has been working on.

It might be a good idea to have a simple action planned that can involve everyone. It might be a quick poster-making or letter-writing activity. Or have concrete and easy ways for new people to plug into your existing working groups. Whatever it is, have it prepared before the meeting. This will excite people, as most groups don't start taking action at their very first meeting. Mark yourselves from the beginning as a group that doesn't just sit around and talk.

It's then worthwhile to ask people to brainstorm about how they feel and what they want to accomplish with the group. You might go around in a circle or break into smaller groups to make sure everyone gets an opportunity to speak. Try to keep the discussion focused without stifling anyone's creativity - group decisions tend to be the most productive, and ideas that seem strange at first can end up being visionary. It is vitally important that as many people as possible be involved in the decision-making process, and that they have a personal stake in the group. If people feel like they are taking orders or being ignored, they will tune out and never come back. Above all, make things fun and informal—just because we're activists doesn't mean we have to be grim.



Depending on how many people you have at the meeting, you should get an idea of how many campaigns the group can tackle at once. List some potential issue campaigns along with a few ideas on what can be done to achieve the goals of the campaigns. If others have ideas for campaigns or events encourage them, even if you think that your group should be focusing on something else. Discounting someone's idea disempowers them and is one of the worst things you can do. On the other hand, you will want to help people to be realistic in what they are proposing, so that they are not disappointed in the future. Also, you might encourage them to think strategically - how will their idea further the goals of the group in the long run?

At the end of the meeting agree on the time for the next meeting. The meeting time should be a proposal ("same time next week?") and decision, not a long discussion. Don't simply ask, "When should we meet next?" It will take all night to decide. If you plan to be active and inclusive, regular meeting times are best. For less active groups, sporadic meetings can be sufficient.

You might also want to give people until the next meeting to start thinking about your group's official name. You're welcome to use "SEAC" of course, or come up with one of your own. Finally, make sure that everyone's assignment for the next meeting is to do some personal recruitment. Do the math: if every person that shows up for your first meeting brings a friend to the second meeting, you'll be twice as large!



It's a nice idea to have the people who have been at the planning meetings hang around afterwards to talk to folks, develop relationships, and answer any questions. This also gives you an opportunity to critique the meeting so that you can do better next time, and leaves a space for anyone else to stick around who'd like to be more involved in the leadership of your group. Make sure to invite new people who are interested to be involved in the planning of the group.

A final note on your kick-off meeting or event: Don't be upset or feel as though you failed if a huge crowd doesn't turn out. It takes time to build a movement, and often people have to hear about things repeatedly and from many different sources before they take it seriously. Also, the number of people in attendance isn't nearly as important as the level of dedication and sincerity that those people possess. Remember the Margaret Mead quote about "small groups of committed citizens..."? We're sure there's no need to repeat it again here.

Now that you have an informal group going, it is important to establish an effective and participatory democratic structure that will assist in transforming your initial enthusiasm into action.

CHAPTER 3 – Structuring a Group

We want structures that serve people, not people serving structures.
(May 1968 graffiti)

Criteria for a Good Organization

Deciding how your group should be structured can be difficult. Do you want to be highly regimented, with officers and a chain of command, or amorphous and egalitarian? Analogously, do you want your meetings to be festooned with strict parliamentary procedure, or to be *oIsteroUs, cH^oTic* affairs?

Here are some desirable characteristics to consider when designing a group structure. Your group, and its meetings, should be conducted in a way that will:

- * Get things done.
- * Be fun.
- * Welcome involvement of new members.
- * Welcome involvement from people with varying levels of commitment, and various points of view.
- * Make all people feel comfortable to speak up, propose new ideas and projects, etc.
- * Respond creatively to new issues and situations.
- * Encourage and empower people to become confident, powerful activists.

We'll discuss these more later, but we see already where it's going: a good group will be effective, fun, and open, and make its decisions in a democratic, participatory way.

Democratic Decision Making

Everyone involved in your group should have a say in what it does, especially about projects that they are working on. You don't want a division between decision-makers and workers. You don't want to create an elite that will alienate new or less experienced members.

It is possible for a group to get bogged down in endless discussions over trivial points, especially when some of the participants don't think they're so trivial. It is partly the role of the facilitator to determine when such a discussion is really warranted, and to cut it off when it's not. If you're lucky, this won't happen too often.

The important thing is that people generally feel happy with what actions and stances you take as a group. If they don't, they'll get frustrated and lose interest. If there is disagreement, if 60% of the group likes an idea but you don't want to alienate the remaining 40%, remember that you can always encourage people to take action or speak out as individuals.

Finally, remember that having a democratic structure is not enough. Democracy is a way of life. You should be constantly encouraging people to participate, give their input, and feel a part of the group.

Voting and Consensus

How do you define when a group agrees on something? The idea of consensus is that you talk about it until pretty much everybody agrees. The down side of this is that a few dissenters can paralyze the group, even when the vast majority endorses something. Then again, a simple majority vote has its drawbacks too. How much “agreement” does 51% or even 60% represent?

One possible model would be to use a majority vote on things that don’t matter all THAT much, like what logo to put on a T-shirt, and consensus, or near-consensus on things like whether or not to stage a sit-in at your administration building. Requiring a two-thirds vote is another possibility, giving a strong mandate but allowing for a significant minority to dissent at the same time.

Remember the importance of respecting a diversity of views. If someone feels crushed by the majority, they’ll leave. Good consensus-builders try to synthesize and combine opposing views. If your group is divided on an issue, and you are going to need everyone’s help in the future for your group to be effective, it might be best to not take any action rather than risking alienating several of your members. Besides, there’s nothing preventing a smaller subset of people from going ahead with their plans independently, as long as they don’t portray themselves as acting on behalf of the entire group.

It’s a good idea to re-state the proposal before voting on it, so people know what they’re voting on.

Leadership and “Officers”: Responsibility vs. Power

A leader is best

When people barely know that she exists,
Not so good when people obey and acclaim him,
Worst when they despise her.
‘Fail to honor people,
They fail to honor you;’
But of a good leader, who talks little,
When his work is done, her aim fulfilled,
They will all say, ‘We did this ourselves.’

(Lao Tzu)

In almost any group, certain members who know the most, have the most experience, do the most work, or have the most resonant speaking voices will be perceived as “leaders” and other people will look to them for guidance. This is bad if it makes others follow passively; it is good if it makes people feel confident and excited and encourages them to speak up and take action. This kind of leadership means communicating a sense of excitement and purpose to a group and thereby empowering everyone.

There is a difference between responsibility and power. There are legitimate responsibilities that need to be filled, and your group can designate certain people to fill them and call them “officers” if you like. However, nobody should be getting ordered around. Remember that you’re in a voluntary organization. People will do, and do well, only what they want to do. A good leader keeps that dynamic going, not with power over her or his fellow members, but by sharing power with all of them. A good leader serves the group, not themselves.

Whatever leadership means to you, it is vital that you practice it in a way that encourages others to become leaders, rather than filling a niche “at the top” and excluding them. This can happen even without an official hierarchy. If you’re not careful, even a relatively unstructured group can become dominated by a few unofficial leaders.

Some Possible “Officers”

Here are some typical roles that your group might need fulfilled, whether or not you choose to create an “office” for them. When the group starts small, some of these roles might be filled by the same people. But when things get big enough, there should be a different person for each role, or even two people (co-coordinators). Don’t let a single person take all the responsibility; that makes burnout more likely, and it denies others the chance to develop leadership and gain valuable organizing skills. Rotate the positions so that everyone gets a chance to participate at the level where they feel comfortable.

Organizer—maintains a list of active projects and their coordinators. She tries to make sure these projects are making progress, maintains contact with the coordinators, asks them to give updates at upcoming meetings, finds new coordinators if old ones drop out, etc. She is like a coordinator for the whole group, and takes responsibility for making sure the group’s goals are being met, that the overall group dynamics are good, new people aren’t being alienated, etc. Of course, the more every member of the group takes responsibility for these things, the better.

Project coordinator—You may want to create a working committee for each project that your group decides to undertake. The project coordinator(s) facilitates the projects, getting people to work on it, possibly sponsoring working committee meetings, and reporting back on its progress at the regular meeting.

Spokesperson—although as many people as possible should get a chance at publicity, it might be good to have a designated spokesperson for the group as a whole. She can announce major events and accomplishments and comment on the group’s overall activities.

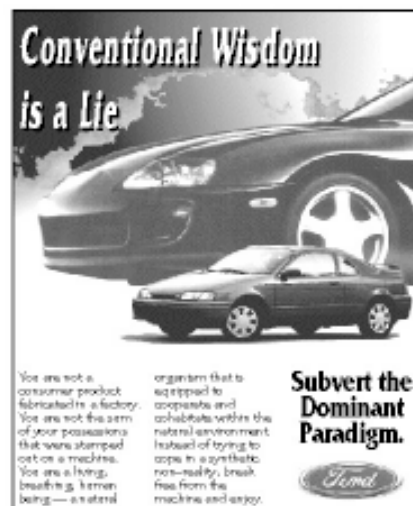
Facilitator—makes sure the meetings run well, and monitors group dynamics. Because of the importance of good facilitation skills, we suggest this role should rotate, with someone different each time. For larger meetings, you might want to use co-facilitators.

Secretary—takes notes at meetings, and maintains an archive of what the group does. This might also be the logical person to edit the group’s newsletter, and manage the group’s website or email list.

Treasurer—helps prepare the budget and ensures that the group doesn’t overspend. Handles the logistics of reimbursing members and reminds your group and members to pay SEAC dues =)

Coalition Builders / Liaisons—if you’re in contact with other groups on campus and in the community there should be someone in your group who gets to know them, works with them to develop joint projects and attends their meetings. These people can also make sure that different groups are informed about and included in rallies and other events. Try to have low turnover in this position, especially for liaisons to non-student groups, as this will be very useful in building trust.

SEAC Contact—Yes! Somebody needs to receive information from SEAC (Threshold magazine, conference information, information about training sessions, campaign materials, and other items), build regional and national student environmental networks, help raise money to support the SEAC network and facilitate your group’s participation in shaping SEAC’s future. This person should be good about getting news about SEAC actions and events to the rest of the group. They should also encourage the group’s members to join SEAC’s regional email list. If your group officially joins SEAC, then you can elect two representatives to serve on SEAC’s National Council – one at-large representative and one person of color.



Remember that your group will have more legitimacy if your officers are from a variety of backgrounds, races, sexes, economic classes, sexual orientations, philosophies, etc. Far too often straight white men dominate the leadership of groups in general and environmental ones in particular. They tend to be leaders in disproportion both to the amount of work they do and their numbers in the general membership. Rotating positions of responsibility helps reduce this problem.

Meeting Roles

One of the most critical positions to fill for smooth, productive meetings is the facilitator. The facilitator of a meeting is responsible for making sure the meeting runs smoothly, the agenda is followed, and discussions proceed constructively. In some large meetings, people raise their hands to be called on by the facilitator to speak. The facilitator can also sense what the consensus is and formulate people's opinions into concrete proposals to be voted on. Here's a sample dialogue that might occur at a meeting:

Facilitator: OK, the next thing on the agenda is the Toxins project. Liz?

Liz: Well, we discovered that the school has been dumping dioxins in the lake and....

Amit: Gee this reminds me of a story I read when I was a kid.

Facilitator: Please, don't interrupt.

Liz: Well we decided we'd like to re-route the drainage pipes into the President's house.

Facilitator: Discussion? [Miya raises her hand] Yes? [points to Miya]

Miya: Isn't that a bit harsh? Maybe we should try the publicity route first.

Andy: Publicity? They didn't care about publicity when they massacred the class of '98!

Chris: Yeah, but they'll get pretty embarrassed if this comes out. The Provost did say he's pro-environment the other day.

Facilitator: OK, it seems like we have two proposals: to re-route the pipes now, or to get a lot of publicity first and see what that does. Hands? [All but two people vote for doing publicity first.] Well, you two can re-route the pipes if you want, but don't claim that the group did it.

Facilitator Tips

The facilitator has the responsibility of making sure the group dynamics are good. The facilitator must balance the conversation so that some people aren't oppressing other people. The facilitator must also make sure that everyone gets to speak and that everyone listens to each other. Speaking and listening are like two great tastes that best go together--you can't have one without the other!

Here are a few miscellaneous tips for facilitators:

- Remember that shy people have good ideas too, even if they aren't voicing them. Every once in a while, say, "let's hear from someone who hasn't spoken yet," especially if a few people seem to be doing all the talking. If there are new people at the meeting, they might have good independent observations on how the meeting seems to them.

- Be aware of male domination in your group. This may be difficult to see because we are raised in a society where male domination is the norm and often goes unquestioned. The same is true for domination by members of other “majorities”. Do not allow sexism, racism, heterosexism, or class oppression to go without notice.
- Sometimes a good point gets raised but is lost in the discussion or goes unnoticed. That’s why it is good to have someone writing the brainstorming ideas on a large notepad or dry erase board. Also the facilitator can help bring an idea back into the discussion by restating it or asking the person that came up with the idea to restate it.
- Keep the discussion moving forward. If everyone seems to agree, state a proposal and check for consensus. If the discussion is deadlocked, try to amend the proposal, or decide whether the group can come to a decision at a later time or in a different venue.
- If a lot of people have their hands up at once, write down their names in a list and call on them in order (this is called ‘keeping a stack’). This way people don’t have to keep their hands up trying to get you to call on them, and it reduces the danger that someone who wants to speak will be ignored repeatedly. If the discussion has moved on to something else by the time someone gets called on, they can bring it back up or simply pass.
- If the discussion is contentious and/or people aren’t respecting each other, try this: declare who the next three speakers are, and don’t let people raise their hands until those three are done. This way everyone concentrates on what’s being said, instead of sighing, moaning, and planning their response.
- The facilitator should be someone who doesn’t have a strong opinion to express on the meeting’s topics. If you really do want to say something, call on yourself, but make sure you don’t use your role as facilitator to dominate the discussion.
- If part of the group is much more knowledgeable, then you can pick several representatives and let them have a free-form (non-facilitated) discussion in the middle of the room. This is called a ‘fish-bowl’ and can also be useful for resolving conflict (by picking representatives of the different sides of the issue).

Probably the hardest thing about facilitating is cutting off your friends when they’re rambling on ad infinitum and keeping a meeting from going too long or getting too lame. You can try telling them when they start speaking how much time they’ll have and give a hand signal when they’re short on time. Facilitating comes with practice, and is a valuable skill. In order for everyone to get experience with it we suggest you give this position to everyone at least once.

Here are additional meeting roles that can be very useful:

Vibes Watcher – A vibes watcher monitors how people are feeling to ensure that no one is being ignored or personally attacked. A vibes watcher must also be aware of people that are getting sleepy, restless, or generally just too unhappy to make decisions. The vibes watcher can remedy these situations by calling for short breaks, stretching exercises, or by bringing to the group's attention the injustices she has observed. (Ex.: someone being ignored, men dominating the conversation, etc). This role is a perfect compliment to the facilitator's role.

Time Keeper – A timekeeper pushes the group and individual speakers to stick to time limits.

Stack Keeper – keeps a list of people who want to speak. Makes the facilitator's job easier when there are a lot of people, or a complicated discussion.

Scribe – takes note from brainstorm, discussion, and proposals and puts them on a chalkboard or big sheet of paper so that everyone can refer to them.

Note Taker – writes the official meeting minutes that can be sent out to the mailing list and kept in the group's archives for future use.



Meeting Tips

Brainstorming and Small Groups

This is standard democratic technique for figuring out what to do. The issue is raised in a general meeting, and for a while everyone “brainstorms.” This means tossing ideas into the air (whoosh!!!), without discussing or criticizing them. Brainstorming allows people to suggest ideas in an atmosphere of openness, without the fear of being put down. Sometimes it is good to have some order to the process to avoid a cacophony of voices and so that each person can be heard. A good method for this is to go around the room (called a “go-around”). Each person names a couple ideas or passes, but does not comment on or criticize the previous speakers. Meanwhile, a scribe writes all the ideas on a board. By saving discussion for later, no one is afraid of having his or her idea rejected.

Afterward, have some discussion to find out what the favorites are. Then, if needed, a small group can split off to work out the details. After a set amount of time or at your next meeting, the small group can come back and report to the whole group on what they came up with, and make sure it's OK. Then you kick ass and do it.

Commitment

It sucks when people say they'll do things and then don't follow through. Generally people do this because they overestimate how much time they really have. In fact, someone who does a small amount of work reliably is more useful to a group than someone who commits to too much and then falls through. So how can you get people to commit reliably?

- ⊕ Be honest and open about how much you are asking for. If you are committing to something be straightforward about how much time you are willing to give. It helps sometimes to break things up into bite-sized chunks. Instead of asking someone to "organize the event," ask a few people to work on logistics, a few people to work on outreach, etc.; just make sure that someone is responsible for keeping an eye to the bigger picture and assuring that all the smaller tasks are being completed.
- ⊕ Sign people up with their name, phone number and email. Remind everyone at the end of the meeting what they've committed to.
- ⊕ Organizers and coordinators should make themselves available and accessible. They should check up on people gently but not nag them. If people feel comfortable enough to say, "Hey, I don't have as much time as I thought I would," you won't get any nasty surprises. Make it easy for them to do whatever they can.
- ⊕ When large numbers of people are working independently on something (i.e. doing outreach to schools, approaching small businesses or groups, working on separate projects, etc.) it's nice to have a "buddy system." This way, people pair up with friends or others who live close to them. They can talk to each other every couple days and say, "So how's it going?" to motivate each other. Play with things like this to help motivate people.
- ⊕ Finally, remember that the more specific the task is, the easier it is to get people to do it. If you tell them the bus leaves at six, they'll go. If you tell them there might be a bus but you're not sure yet, and they should call so-and-so if they're interested, a lot of good people won't get around to it. If things are really up in the air, sign people up and get back to them with specific information later.

The Criticism Sandwich

BREAD: Say something positive about what they are doing.

LIVERWURST WITH ONIONS (yucky!) State politely and to the point what your concern is. It definitely helps to take a taste test with this part of the sandwich once or twice ahead of time. Try saying this part aloud to yourself or to a friend, and honestly try to anticipate and evaluate the reaction this statement will have on another group member.

MORE BREAD: Cushion the shock of that not so tasty liverwurst and onions with another positive statement about that person.

For example:

“I’m really impressed with what you’ve done to try to stop logging in the Hoosier National Forest. (BREAD)

“But I’m worried that Eco-Terrorists for the Eradication of all Humans might not be the best group to work with. (LIVERWURST WITH ONIONS)

“You are very good at building coalitions with other groups. Perhaps you and I could build one with Heartwood instead? (BREAD)



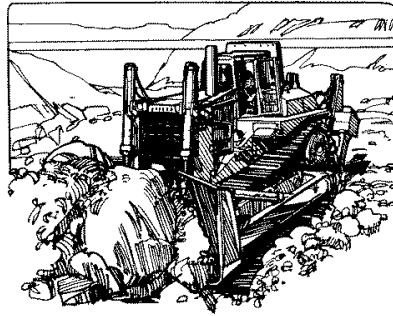
Should you get offered a criticism sandwich, try not to be defensive. It is difficult not to get defensive when you are feeling attacked. That is why it is so important to frame criticism in positive, unthreatening tones.

Meeting Structure

Here are some typical components you might want to have in a meeting:

- * **START ON TIME!** If you don’t, you’ll find yourself starting a little bit later every time because people will assume they can come late since it’ll start late.
Have an agenda. This will give people a solid idea of what’s going to be discussed, and help the group to prioritize what needs to be discussed first. Review the agenda at the beginning of the meeting, and allow people to propose new items not already listed.
- * Start with brief introductions. Many people have trouble remembering names, and it will build your group’s sense of community for people to regularly introduce themselves and share something significant that happened to them since you last met. Essential if you have any new members.
- * Pass around a sign-in sheet. Essential if you have any new members.
- * Set ground rules for the meeting and follow them for the rest of the school year.
- * Bring in presentations on issues or skills. Experienced group members or guests could give presentations. This helps educate and empower the group internally. Remember that there are a lot of people coming to your meetings to learn! Educate and include them.
- * Present appeals from SEAC and other partner groups for help, direct action and involvement. This usually goes hand in hand with presenting any important mail, phone calls, or emails the group has received.
- * Announce new projects and enlist interested parties for them.
- * Update group members on the progress that has been made on old projects since your last meeting.
- * Give quick updates on old projects where not much has happened.

- ã Each week some campaign coordinator could present an urgent issue to the group to write letters about. It is usually most effective to have several different letters already written that group members can read and sign, or just one letter for everyone to sign.
- ã Discuss recent current events (that are applicable) and give inspiration.
- ã Split up into small groups to work on each project. This depends on the size of the group. You might be able to do everything in the main meeting, or you might need separate meetings.
- ã Review your group's most recent event(s). Share news clippings. What went well? What could you do better next time?
- ã Openly discuss the group's dynamics. Every few weeks it's a good idea to air out frustrations. Ask people how they feel about the group.
- ã Towards the end of the meeting give people a chance to bring up any new concerns that haven't already been addressed. Also formulate what the agenda will be for your next meeting, as well as deciding what roles people are going to play (e.g., facilitator). Remind people to bring a friend along next time, and thank the new folks who have joined your group for the first time.
- ã Try regularly sharing a meal (like a potluck) before the meeting or at another time during the week. This will help everyone feel more comfortable and build community.
- ã The main group meeting should probably not be more than an hour, especially if you want to have committee meetings afterward.
- ã **FINISH ON TIME!** This goes hand in hand with starting on time. Starting and finishing on time reaffirms the fact that people's time is a valuable commodity.



Play with these things to find the right mix. Do what works.

Keep the tone of the meetings positive. Bad meetings completely kill a group, especially for new members. People should not be bored, frustrated, or confused. If things get tense, tell a joke! If there seems to be a problem, be open about it and seek people's input about how the meetings could be improved. If you're wondering how the meeting went, ask a new member—they're the best judges.

The basic question of the meeting should be: OK, what are we going to do?

At the end of the meeting, everyone should know:

- ⊗ When and where the next meeting is. (Try to hold regular weekly meetings)
- ⊗ What they're supposed to do.
- ⊗ How to get in touch with people if they want to help. (You could write names and numbers on a chalkboard, or pass out sheet with contacts.)
- ⊗ Who's going to facilitate the next meeting and how to get in touch with them.

There's some skill involved in getting projects across to people, especially in a large group where a lot of things are going on. Sometimes you might find that in the whirlwind of discussion about what position to take on the Botulism Bomb factory, nobody realizes that they're supposed to show up at the town meeting on Tuesday. To avoid this, project coordinators and others giving presentations on upcoming projects and events should learn how to emphasize things so that people can really hear them.

A good outline for a presentation might be:

A very brief background on the project, for example:

"OK, you've all heard that Death Inc. plans to build a Botulism Bomb Factory in the middle of the 32nd Street Public Housing Complex. We're gonna stop 'em!"

Discuss what is being done for the project:

"We drafted this letter to the Town Council. What do you think of it?"

Tell people in the group what needs to be done for the project and when:

"We need help going door to door to get people at the town meeting."

"Come to the town meeting on Tuesday!"

Collect the contact information on the people that you've activated with your presentation:

"OK, we're passing around a sign-up sheet for people who want to help. We meet at Hoser Hall tomorrow at 2:00."

Remind group members about what your call to action was:

"So show up Tuesday to let your voice be heard! If you need more info call me at 222-4711."

Excite people! Make it happen.

Meeting Agenda

Who sets the agenda? The organizer or secretary or chair could do it, but it's better to do it democratically. One idea is to get people to contact the upcoming meeting's facilitator at least a day ahead if they're going to need time at a meeting, but people often bring things up at the last minute, and the meeting runs over. You can post the agenda for a meeting and have a couple minutes to modify it at the beginning of a meeting. Also try to make some time during the meeting to gather ideas for the next meeting's agenda.



Communication Problems

The best kind of communication is when people trust each other, both to say what's on their mind and to listen to others and let them speak. This way, you can say something once, trust that it was heard, and not have to repeat it. Try to communicate in a way that doesn't oppress people. In particular:

- Don't interrupt.
- Pay attention to what the speaker is saying, and think about it. Don't just think about what you're going to say next.
- If somebody else already made the point you were going to, just take that hand down or pass.
- Don't repeat yourself. Did we mention that you should not repeat yourself? If you've had your say and the group disagrees, sit back and deal with it. But don't repeat yourself.
- Do share your knowledge, experiences, and ideas—don't be shy. Every time a good idea doesn't get heard because you didn't speak up, an acre of rainforest gets chopped.
- Even if you think what somebody said is completely stupid, treat them with respect. Deal with the content of what they're saying, rather than just putting it down or labeling it. Don't attack people in your group. Ever.
- Regard discussions as cooperative rather than antagonistic affairs, with the common goal of reaching agreement and taking action.
- BE INCLUSIVE IN YOUR LANGUAGE. If you haven't learned yet to say "woman" instead of "girl," he or she" (or "she or he") instead of "he," and "humanity" or something instead of "mankind," please do it now.
- Share the spotlight. Remember that having quick meetings is not our only goal--we also want to build leadership. A good exercise, especially for people who have been involved in the group for awhile, is to sit back and wait to see if someone else makes the point that you were wanting to make. If all of the important points are made without you ever having to speak, consider yourself a staunch practitioner or Jedi mindtricks, or chalk it up to the "great minds think alike" dictum.

Note: The Right is attacking inclusive language as part of its assault against the "PC" bogeyperson, which is actually a disguise for their general assault on women and people of color! Using inclusive language is an important thing—the way we think is indeed affected by the language we use. The problems arise when people pathologically scapegoat others who make an occasional slip, or when people think that using the right words automatically cures us of racist and sexist tendencies. These tendencies run far too deep in our psyches and in the structures of society for simple word substitution to cure. Avoid the excesses of PCness but remember that most of what is associated with that term is positive and progressive.

Continuity and Involving New People

People graduate and move on, and you don't want your group to fall apart when they do. It's important to maintain your group's continuity, so that it can build its power and experience over the long haul. There are two ways to do this: constantly involve new people and make sure that skills and connections are possessed by the group as a whole rather than any one individual.

Here are a few suggestions for building your group's long term health:

- ★ Pass your skills and experiences on to the rest of the group. Give presentations at meetings describing the local press, how to write a press release, how to reserve a room, how the administration works, and stories about major past campaigns. Take your skills seriously! These things are learned, and you can teach them to others. Everyone shouldn't have to reinvent the wheel.
- ★ Run things in a way that is transferable to others. For instance, take good notes on everything you do so that others can pick up where you left off. Don't keep things in your head (unless you're donating your brain to the group when you leave).
- ★ Maintain a good archive of the group and its activities so that people next year will be able to read about what you did. This could be a newsletter, a scrapbook, folder, annual report or a website. Include all your past posters, newspaper clippings, pictures, meeting minutes and so on. This can give the group a great feeling of accomplishment at the end of the year.
- ★ Write down a list of useful contacts among the faculty, the administration and the community. Call it a "human-resource file." Don't let these vital contacts disappear with you.
- ★ Designate successors a semester in advance and train them. Have them attend key meetings with you so they can get to know the people they'll be working with. Having overlap between old and new people help makes the transition smoother, and keeps skills and information from getting lost. For instance, if there are two co-chairs, elect one in November and the other one in April.
- ★ Tell stories to communicate the spirit and flavor of past campaigns (Ex.: "Back when I was your age, they tried to build a nuclear power reactor on campus, but we showed them...").
- ★ Give new people opportunities that will help build their confidence. Encourage them to engage in public speaking, coordinating projects, and facilitating meetings as soon as (or before!) they feel ready.



- ★ Empower new people by giving them meaningful tasks early on. Here's an example from the article "Organizational Development: The Seven Deadly Sins," by Andrea Ayvazian of the Peace Development Fund's Exchange Project (Amherst, MA)

I joined a community peace group in 1980 that had been together a long time," Ayvazian writes. When I first got there, I did not understand what was going on. They were talking about events that had happened a year before, what had worked and what had not worked and that information all went past me. Not until I had been to about four meetings did someone notice I had not said much.

At the end of that fourth meeting this person asked if I would appear on a call-in radio program in three weeks with another member of the group. She helped me prepare for it and, although I still felt quite green about the issues and did not say very much on the show, I was buoyed up by her confidence in me.

After the show, having publicly represented the group, I felt very involved with it. I felt that I had done something important. Giving newcomers that kind of meaningful task early on is what groups need to do to keep new people.

Note here that a more established person deliberately helped bring the new person in—this kind of "buddy system" can be very good. Andrea goes on to point out that,

Even if you did something three years ago, somebody new in the group may have a new turn on it, or may want to head it up differently. It does not help to respond automatically with, "We did that." Treated in this manner, new people feel both they and their ideas dismissed.

- ★ Evaluate the idea with the new person: "This is not a good community for Christmas balls—or at least it hasn't been in the past." But try to resist making absolute responses.

A key issue here is trusting that those new people can do a good job. You just have to help them start out, give them the information they need, hang around for a while in case they need help, and then let go. If you're having trouble letting go, consider the fact that in a democratic, ongoing process no one person is ever in control of the group.



Common ailments of meetings:

- ✧ Are meetings boring? If so they probably aren't action-oriented enough. Try holding the next one inside a jail, a moving freight train, or a burning building (just kidding). You may want to have the group make signs for the next protest, though. Make sure new people are being invited to help.
- ✧ Are your meetings clogged with too much detail? Unless something interests a substantial part of the group, it should be discussed in a small-group meeting instead. This is for the facilitator to judge (though anyone can complain).
- ✧ Are people feeling left out and stupid because speakers are assuming that people know what they're talking about, and using a lot of jargon? Speak plainly. Do more education at meetings. If a speaker uses a word or phrase that a lot of people don't know (what the hell is a perched water table anyway?), stop them and have them explain it.
- ✧ Are people dominating because they have connections with various bigwigs? Have others go with them to bigwig meetings. Make sure these connections are shared, as they belong to the whole group.
- ✧ Are people dominating because they know a lot? Have them give presentations and teach the rest of the group. However, make sure this person is really teaching and not just showing off.
- ✧ Are people dominating because they're more confident than the rest, better speakers, etc.? The facilitator should call on others.
- ✧ Is one part of the group (men, whites, seniors, etc.) doing all the talking? The facilitator should ask for input from the rest of the group.
- ✧ Are people turned off because speakers are assuming too much about their ideology? This calls for some simple politeness. If people want to help, they shouldn't feel excluded just because they are more conservative or more radical than the rest of the group. Maybe there could be a meeting to discuss everyone's ideology.
- ✧ Do meetings run overtime? Set time limits, stick to the agenda, and start on time even if not everybody's there. People will be much more willing to come to meetings if they know they can get out by a certain time.



Honesty

The key thing for any problem, with the group or with an individual, is honesty. There's no need to scheme. Be open with everybody involved, and have some trust in them. It works, and it's worth it.

I don't know what to make of all this honesty. I think it's a bad idea all the way round. Why don't we go back in the other room and try to manipulate each other the way real people do?
(Marge Piercy, Vida)

Hand Signals

These are a cute but effective way for people to comment without having to disrupt the meeting. For instance, instead of having to raise your hand to say, “I support that,” you can just give the Silent Cheer. This helps the facilitator read the mood of the whole group rather than being blinded by the attitudes of a few aggressive speakers.

Here are some suggested signals (collect ‘em all and trade them with your friends!):

- **Silent Cheer:** Hold up your arms and wiggle your fingers in the air.
- **Frame:** Draw a box with your hands. Where does this fit in? Why are we talking about this? Give me some background or context.
- **Focus / Get to the Point:** Move your hands back in forth bringing them together in a ‘V’ shape. Get back to the point. Use this signal when speakers are rambling.
- **Circle:** Wave your finger around in a circle over your head. We’re going in circles! This has already been said.
- **Let’s get on with it:** Roll your hands, so as to say, “come on, come on...” Let’s get on with the agenda. This can be discussed later in a smaller group or committee. (Though be respectful as some people take longer to express themselves.)
- **Time:** The traditional two-hand ‘T’. Yer OUT!
- **Energy Check / Frustration Check:** The facilitator can call for these to measure how group members feel (i.e. good, bad, or ugly — I mean OK). People can hold their hands out high, at waist level, or down on the floor.
- **Point of Information or Order:** Extend your arm straight horizontally, with a finger pointing outward. Use this signal to correct a false statement (“We only have \$150 in our budget, not \$250!”), provide a useful piece of information (“The trustees are meeting on March 17, maybe we could protest then!”), or to ask a process related question (“Is anyone writing this down?”). Use this only to make short statements or questions. They must be important enough to break the regular order of speakers.
- **Jargon:** Throw up your hands with palms upside down. “I don’t know what the heck you’re talking about!” Use this signal for acronyms or when people refer to things you haven’t heard of.
- **Bull Shit:** Fold your arms, laying one on the top of the other. Have the hand of the arm on top stretch out two fingers (bull horns). Have the second hand (on bottom), make an opening-closing motion. This signal should be used in good humor and never as an attack on someone.

Feel free to invent your own!

CHAPTER 4 – Issues

The issue is not the issue.
(Berkeley 1964)

Choosing a campaign for your group is very important as it will define your organization in the eyes of the public, and increase your chances for success or failure based on the wisdom of your choice. At the beginning of the school year (or at the end of a campaign) you should brainstorm a list of issues and then narrow it down.

The following is a list of criteria for selecting an issue from the manual “Organizing for Social Change” by the Midwest Academy (they train community activists). While it is hard to meet all of them, it is a useful checklist for comparing issues. Here we’ll show how you could decide between starting a recycling program, fighting a locally proposed incinerator, and challenging Shell for its complicity in environmental destruction and human rights abuses in Nigeria.



| Selection Criteria | Recycling Program | Incinerator | Shell in Nigeria |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Result in Real Improvement in People's Lives | Not really, other than a small warm feeling because some of your trash is being recycled. | Yes. Major health benefits (protection from dioxins, other toxic byproducts, and cancer!) | Ends ecological destruction and murder of indigenous people. No measurable improvement for non-Nigerians. |
| 2. Give People a Sense of Their Own Power | Kind-of. Winning a recycling program is not a huge deal. | Yes. Huge. | Yes. Huge. |
| 3. Alter Relations of Power | No, or very little. Recycling programs are mainstream. | Yes. Strengthens community activists to resist corporate domination. | Yes. Forces corporations to act less murderous and empowers Nigerian activists by lessening corporate sponsored repression. |
| 4. Be Worthwhile | Yes. | Yes. More so than recycling. | Yes. More so than recycling. |
| 5. Be Winnable | Yes, easily. | Yes, harder. | Yes, but very hard and will take a lot of help from other groups. |
| 6. Be Widely Felt | Yes. | No, but once people know about the dangers they can / will change a lot. | No, but education can help a little. |
| 7. Be Deeply Felt | Maybe. Some people are very committed, whereas others see recycling as only a small step. | Yes. | Yes. |
| 8. Be Easy to Understand | Very easy. | More complex. | More complex (foreign country). |

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| 9. Have a Clear Target | Yes. School administration. | Yes. State Environmental Agency (or municipal government). | Yes. Shell (the bastards!). |
| 10. Have a Clear Time Frame that Works for You | Winnable in a year and if you initiate the issue, you can set the time line. | Government or the incinerator corporation sets much of the time line. | You can help set the time line. But you need to fight until you win. |
| 11. Be Non-Divisive | Yes, how can anyone disagree with recycling? | Yes. | Yes. |
| 12. Build Leadership | Yes. Improves your ability to negotiate with your administration. | Builds activist skills (organizing rallies, press releases, and petitions) with a community activism emphasis. | Builds activist skills, with an emphasis on international solidarity work. |
| 13. Set your Organization for the Next Campaign | Can move on to reducing other environmental harm that your school does. | By building alliances within the community you are ready to tackle another community environmental problem (there are a never-ending number). | Could tackle more international issues (Free Burma, global trade agreements over-ruling environmental laws). |
| 14. Have a pocketbook angle | No. | No. | No. |
| 15. Raise Money | No. | Yes, you could canvass the community for donations. | No. |
| 16. Be Consistent with Your Values and Vision | Yes (though depends on how radical your vision is). | Yes (particularly for a community – oriented group). | Yes (more international). |

As you can see from this example, there are often several good issues for a group to choose, and which one it picks depends upon what members of the organization want to focus on. In this case, while the recycling program falls short in some of the criteria, a small or new group might want to take it on to get an easy win early on to build the organization before moving on to tougher fights.

Keep in mind that you should aim for structural change. For instance, instead of creating a volunteer recycling program that you will have to spend all your time to staff, you should get your school to institutionalize one. Then your group will have the energy to tackle the next issue. Band-aids are good (e.g., cleanups), but stopping the person/institution who is causing the bleeding is best (corporations who pollute).

There is a delicate balance between tackling big issues and taking on a campaign you feel pretty confident you can win. Sure you'd love to get Congress to pass a bill banning all old-growth logging, but you would probably stand a better chance saving the nearest forest in your state. For an active group, it's probably best to mix local and more easily achievable campaigns (where you can clearly see your impact) with regional/national/international ones where you'll learn a lot by networking with other people and have a chance of being the difference between a large failure and a large success!

One thing the Midwest Academy excludes from their criteria is that the issue you choose is incredibly critical in determining who will be interested in joining your group. If you spend all your time working on forest activism, global warming, and recycling, then your organization is going to be extremely white and middle-class. If you work on community issues you may be working with more people of color and members of the working class. Here again you might want to try working both on a campus issue (which is probably easier to mobilize students around) and a community one. If you care about diversity (and you should!), try networking with campus workers (support the right to unionize), workers off-campus (e.g., farm workers, city campaigns for a living wage), and tackling cases of environmental racism and classism (where corporations are disproportionately dumping toxins on people of color and the poor).

You can also frame and organize around traditional environmental issues so that they become environmental justice causes. For instance, instead of working to simply 'save the rainforest' you could make sure to include information in your campaigning about how deforestation is being driven by the oppression of indigenous people and the important links between rainforest destruction and poverty in the developing world. Include an analysis of where your university's waste goes in your campaign to create or improve your recycling program. It's probably getting dumped on poor and people of color communities. Try to support struggles that concern and are led by people of color, the poor, women, and queers.

Possible Issues

Here are some ideas for issues that your group might want to work on.

Environmental Racism

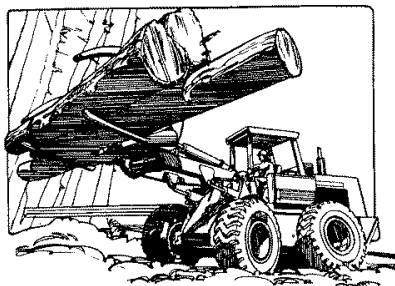
Often corporations and governments will place incinerators, landfills, toxic dumps, nuclear waste, coal power plants and other threats to human health in communities where people of color live. This is far more likely to happen than for them to risk the lives of middle class whites. This is environmental racism. You might want to use GIS (Geographical Information Systems) and Census data (available from many universities) for your area, to determine whether toxic sites are disproportionately placed in people of color and/or poor communities. Join with community organizations to stop polluters from moving in, and expose the real health threat to the community. For instance, SEACers in Pennsylvania have worked with Chester Residents Concerned for Quality Living who have been fighting against corporate dumping of toxins and waste on their community.

Tampons

Tampons contain rayon (for absorbency) and dioxin (a by-product of chlorine bleaching). Dioxins are one of the most toxic chemicals known, being linked to cancer, endometriosis, and reproduction problems in amounts as small as parts per trillion; and rayon acts to encourage bacterial growth causing conditions such as toxic shock syndrome, and over-absorption of bodily fluids which can greatly suppress the immune system. The Food Drug Administration estimates that tampons cause half of the cases of Toxic Shock Syndrome. The average woman uses between 11,000 and 16,000 tampons in her lifetime. SEAC advocates that you switch to alternative products, educate your friends, and pressure corporations to use safer processes (like oxygen bleaching) for menstrual products. For more information join the email list: seac-tampons@seac.org.

Forest Activism

Most Americans don't even know our country has rainforests (not tropical, but temperate) which are often called 'Old Growth' or 'Ancient Forests'. They possess the same irreplaceable wealth of biological diversity the rainforests of Brazil have, and less than 5% of them are left (source: National Geographic, Sept. 1990). What little is left of the National Forest land is primarily in Oregon and Washington (the Pacific Northwest), and in Alaska. The National Forest Service is busy selling it at cut-rate prices to the timber industry, even though the timber industry's own private forests, if logged sustainably, could provide us with all the timber we need.



The industry has tried to paint a picture of forest preservation versus jobs. In fact, loggers have been losing jobs even while cutting has increased to record rates, for two reasons: mechanization (modern clear-cutting doesn't need much labor) and the export of raw logs to Japan, denying American workers the chance to process them. This is a disaster for our economy. A good place to start is to stop the over \$700 million per year in taxpayer subsidies which enable corporations to log on public lands, by funding their road building, tree replanting, and program administration. This does not include the indirect costs to the fishing and tourism industries. The public is widely supportive of efforts to convince Congress to pass legislation (the National Forest Protection and Restoration Act) that would end all logging in the National Forests. SEACers have been mobilizing around this issue all over the country.

You can also stop logging by fighting individual forest timber sales. Adopt a local forest. Keep track of what projects are being proposed and mobilize friends to write public comments. If a bad plan is still about to go through, you can do research, file an appeal and challenge it in court as a violation of federal law or of the area's 'Forest Plan.'

Materials Reduction

Also called "Pre-cycling." Reduce the amount of waste that's being produced in the first place! Even recycling is a manufacturing process that uses energy and creates toxins. Individuals, and schools as a whole, should utilize re-usables instead of disposables, buy in bulk and avoid products with excessive packaging. Educate local merchants about our waste problem, and how they can help by reducing their use of disposables. Get them (and your school dining services) to offer discounts to people who bring their own mugs, etc. Marketing your own reusable mug can be a good fundraiser—some groups have raised over \$1000 in a few weeks. Have an "Enviro-Keg" party and sell 'em there. A lot of consumption in our society is excessive and endangering to our planet. Promote simple living.

Live simply, so that others might simply live.

Recycling

Paper, cardboard, glass, and aluminum (cans and bottles) are all recyclable. Recycling saves energy (though less than reducing) and creates jobs. Plastic and styrofoam can be down-cycled (used to make a product of lower quality that cannot be recycled). Styrofoam leaches a toxic chemical (styrene) into food, and does not decompose. Styrofoam recycling is usually unsuccessful and is still toxic and wasteful. You should just ban it.

Is your school recycling everything it can? How well is it working? Have they done enough education? The actual amount of waste produced by the dorms will likely be small compared to academic buildings, but recycling in the dorms has the added educational value that it forms residents' future habits. Propose expansions to the program and do education yourselves. Put up posters, get information on

recycling and waste reduction included in the orientation packets new students receive, or do presentations in the dorms. You can set up a recycling program yourselves if you want, but the school should institutionalize it—it's their responsibility.

Recycled Paper (Paper Procurement)

For recycling to work, there needs to be a market for the recycled material. Recycled paper is now comparable in price and quality to normal paper made from 'virgin' fibers—your school, your newspapers, your government and individuals should be buying it. (Consider how many sheets of paper your college uses per week!) Prices are higher now because of the lack of distributors, longer shipping distances and government subsidies for virgin materials (est. \$2.6 billion direct cost, which doesn't include the effect of the resulting environmental destruction). But the more we buy, the more the price will come down.

The chlorine bleaching process also produces dioxins, so get unbleached or "processed chlorine-free" paper if you can. So-called "elemental chlorine free" is a sham (it still uses toxic chlorine dioxide). Or reduce your school's dependence on paper by getting them to use more email. Also get people to use two-sided copying and printing. White or off-white paper is better than brightly colored. Other recycled paper products, like toilet paper and paper towels, are also available.

Make sure what you're getting is really recycled. The best is 100% post-consumer waste, not just shavings and cuttings from the plant (sometimes called "reclaimed" or "pre-consumer"). As of Jan. 1, 1999, the federal government requires that its departments use at least 30% post-consumer waste content. Don't accept something that says "recycled" without seeing these percentages.

To summarize waste-related issues, here is a suggested ranking of various practices:

| |
|--|
| Reducing the amount of waste in the first place—BEST |
| Recycling and buying recycled products—GOOD |
| "Recycling" plastic—WELL . . . OK |
| Throwing paper away—NOT SO GOOD |
| Throwing plastic and Styrofoam away—AWFUL |

Campus Environmental Impact

Your school has a large impact upon the environment. Many students groups have organized campus environmental audits to see how much energy, paper, food, metal, chemicals, and other resources their school uses, and how much waste it generates. As part of the audit, you will find dozens of ways in which your school could reduce its impact. Audits are both a good way of learning about environmental responsibility, as well as a concrete way to do good. You might want to reduce the number of lights (or switch to fluorescents), compost the food waste from your dining halls, eliminate all disposables, eliminate pesticides, use the water sprinklers less, and switch to recycled paper. And that is only a start!

Global Warming

Certain gases absorb infrared radiation, and thus act as a blanket trapping the heat the Earth receives from the Sun. The four most important greenhouse gases, and their causes, are: Carbon Monoxide — burning fossil fuels, deforestation; Methane (CH_4) — solid waste, agriculture, cow farts; Nitrous Oxide (N_2O) — smog, chemical fertilizers; and CFCs / HFCs / PFCs—air conditioners, refrigerators, some styrofoam (note this is a separate effect from ozone depletion). This last category (halogenated chemicals — those which contain fluorine, chlorine or bromine), while accounting for the smallest amount of greenhouse gases by volume, is so extremely potent that it is responsible for the vast majority of global warming damage. These chemicals can and should be phased out. All of these are being pumped into the atmosphere at increasing rates; scientists expect a warming of 3-8°F by the middle of the next century. The greenhouse effect is already starting. The fifteen hottest years on record are all since 1980. Effects might include a sea level rise of 1-2 meters, severe droughts and floods, disruption of weather and ocean patterns, etc. More extremes of both heat and cold are expected—so individual cold winters are not proof that the greenhouse effect is not taking place.



The exact effects are highly uncertain—the Earth is full of complex feedback that could make the problem better or much worse. These effects are too complicated to reliably predict—and we have no time to refine our analysis, because the gasses we’re putting in the atmosphere now will affect us for decades to come. We can’t wait to see how it comes out.

Luckily, most of the things we need to do to reduce our output of these gasses are pretty sensible anyway. We need to stop deforestation, ban CFCs, control smog, and reduce our use of chemical fertilizers by moving towards organic farming. Since agriculture, especially livestock, is a major source of methane, eating lower on the food chain and controlling our population would help. Finally we need to reduce our use of energy and switch to alternative sources like solar and wind.

Animal Rights, Vegetarianism, and Veganism

Is it right for humans to kill billions of animals annually? Is it right for humans to cause animals to experience unnecessary suffering? Is animal testing ethical? The idea that humanity is the center of all life and therefore deserves the right to treat all other inhabitants of the Earth in whatever way it chooses is called “anthropocentrism.” The extension of this dangerous worldview is also responsible for much of the environmental destruction that humans wreak upon our planet,

and many youth activists have gotten their start as activists via the animal rights movement.

Young people have refused to participate in science experiments that use real animals, have led boycott campaigns against corporations who profit from animal cruelty, have fought to defend the rights of domesticated animals and wildlife to live free from oppression, and have made dramatic changes in their lifestyles in order to reduce animal suffering in the world. Organizing around animal rights issues can be a great way to build community on your campus and to make direct impacts that will affect the lives of your fellow students. For instance, many students are vegetarian, but go to schools where their food service does not provide a good selection of vegetarian fare. Students can come together to pressure their food service into making changes, can make sure that any local or campus vendors sell cruelty-free products, and can encourage the biology department on their campus to provide students with alternatives to animal experimentation. Having regular vegetarian potlucks are also a fun way to build community and encourage alternative living.



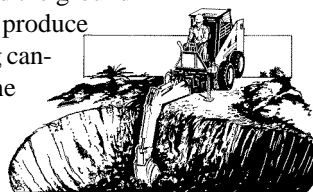
Beyond making institutional changes, there are no shortage of opportunities for educating the campus community on animal rights issues and participating in national or regionally-coordinated campaigns to preserve wildlife habitat and bring animal exploitation to an end.

The animals of the world exist for their own reasons. They were not made for humans any more than black people were made for white, or women created for men.

(Alice Walker)

Landfills

Landfills are a danger both to their neighbors and the entire world. Incinerator ash (high in heavy metals) is dumped in landfills. Not only that, but landfills also contain hundreds of thousands of tons of PCBs and many continue to receive the waste from small-scale toxin producers who are unregulated. As rain and snow falls on them and mixes with toxins at the sites, landfills produce leachate which leaks into the groundwater supply, contaminating wells and streams. Landfills are meant to be sealed for thirty years after they are full, however afterwards owners are not required to monitor them for leakage, and 'sealed' landfills often leak. According to EPA estimates, a 100-acre landfill in the northeastern United States can produce 57 million gallons of leachate every year. In 1986, NY State estimated that half of its landfills had contaminated the groundwater. Incinerators are even worse, because they produce dioxins (a deadly toxin that bioaccumulates, causing cancer and birth disorders), spread toxins all around the globe and leave a super-toxic ash that still must be dumped into landfills, making the leaching problem even more dangerous.



Corporate Globalization

Politicians argue that export-led growth and embracing the free market are the best ways for poorer nations to develop. However, while international trade has skyrocketed, the gap between the rich and poor has also grown.

“Free” trade allows corporations to produce where workers are cheapest, union campaigns are met with fierce repression, and environmental laws are weak or unenforced. Corporations are closing factories in the U.S., firing their workers and reopening in cheaper locations. The new rules of the global economy (which are being written by politicians for their corporate sponsors) now allow corporations (or foreign governments) to sue governments demanding that they repeal environmental regulations by claiming that such regulations are barriers to free trade! For instance, the European Union was forced to end an 11-year ban on US and Canadian beef containing artificial growth hormones; and the US was forced to import dirty petroleum. Over 130 countries belong to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and are subject to these rules. In the fall of 1999, the WTO was considering removing tariffs on the exporting of forest products. Their removal would cause an estimated 3-4% increase in global logging! In the future the WTO might require the privatization of health care, education, and other governmental services.

The International Monetary Fund and World Bank require that Third World countries submit to their economic recommendations or they are starved of the funds that they need to pay interest on their debts. Most of this debt was accumulated under non-democratic governments, and it does not make sense that the poorest countries in the world should have to slash government spending on education and health care to pay interest on it. Together these two institutions are imposing an intensely capitalist top-down form of economic development that encourages mega development projects, export-led growth, low wages, and corporate-friendly policies. Instead we should be promoting development of human capital through education and basic healthcare, grassroots community-led development, and self-sufficiency.

Safe Food — Genetic Engineering

Multinational corporations are genetically altering our food so they can increase production and their profit margins. Currently 60-70% of our grocery food is genetically engineered (GE). The danger is that we do not know what could happen as GE plants cross-pollinate, what the properties of their offspring will be, whether new allergies or toxins will be produced, and how susceptible the plants will be to pests, diseases and natural disasters. As plants can easily spread, once genetically engineered ones are introduced into the environment the impact can be irreversible. One of the worst biotechnology corporations, Monsanto, is producing Roundup-Ready soybeans, which allow farmers to spray more pesticides on a field without harming the soybeans (but ruining the local ecosystem). Monsanto has also produced a potato that contains a pesticide (called ‘BT’). It kills bugs, but is still labeled as safe for humans even though it has not been thoroughly enough tested.

As a response to consumer concern, 24 of the 30 biggest United Kingdom food producers are moving to GE-free food (Friends of the Earth, 1999). Students can investigate whether their university participates in GE research, get their dining services to go GE free or pressure their suppliers, educate the public about the dangers of GE foods, and lobby politicians to support the labeling of GE products.



Indian farmers burn genetically engineered crops - Nov. 1998.

Indigenous Rights

An underlying and commonly ignored reality is that the people who settled the United States, Canada, and other regions throughout the Americas stole the land through a process of deception and genocide from previously thriving indigenous nations. According to Ward Churchill, every treaty between the U.S. and First Nations' governments has been broken. In Canada, First Nations' issues get far more attention than in the U.S. Canadian courts have ruled in favor of the indigenous right to sustenance fishing and hunting. The U.S. needs to recognize that indigenous people are sovereign nations, start a treaty commission, review treaty violations, negotiate new treaties, allow for indigenous self-determination, and give back a land and resource base that is sufficient for First Nations to rebuild a sustainable culture.

Governments and corporations are still practicing genocide on indigenous cultures. Often First Nations are seen as easy targets because they lack the money to buy political clout. For instance, during World War II, the federal government took land from the Oglala Sioux Nation (in what is known as South Dakota) to use for a firing range. Thirty years later, the government had not fulfilled their promise to return it and was plotting to purchase it for next to nothing so that they could exploit its rich uranium deposit. When residents resisted selling their sacred land, the FBI sponsored a campaign of terror on the Pine Ridge reservation. An armed standoff led to the deaths of two FBI agents and several American Indians. Leonard Peltier, a leader of the American Indian Movement, got framed in order to take him out of action and was given a life sentence.

Also the federal government is promoting conflict between the Dineh and Hopi nations in Arizona for the benefit of large corporations, like Peabody Coal, who are strip-mining the area and burning dirty coal to generate electricity. In this context,

SEACers have been very active in the fight to save Mt. Graham, in Arizona, from a telescope project that would destroy the ecosystem of an endangered squirrel and ruin sacred land. SEACers have been involved in struggles to prevent nuclear waste dumping on Native American lands in Nevada and California. Finally, SEACers helped stop Hydro Quebec's James Bay II project that would have built dams and flooded vast areas of native land, destroying ecosystems.

There are many international indigenous rights issues as well. On Jan. 1, 1994, the Zapatistas took over part of the Mexican state of Chiapas demanding justice, democracy, and land reform. The civil war continues at a low-intensity, and Chiapas has become very militarized with death squads who threaten and kill people who support the rebels. In Nigeria, the Ogonis' struggle against environmental destruction has been met with brutal repression sponsored by Shell Oil and carried out by the Nigerian government (including the execution of Ogoni leader Ken Saro-Wiwa).

All too often indigenous people are under attack by corporations seeking to exploit their resources, and everyone needs to support their struggles.



Democracy on Campus

Is the purpose of universities, community colleges and high schools to teach students how to think critically and develop an awareness of the world, its problems and solutions? Or is their function to produce subservient workers to fill the cogs of corporations and produce cheap research for them? At most universities, colleges, and especially high schools, a small elite group of administrators (or trustees) decides what happens and students, community, faculty and staff have very little say. What kind of values are being taught when our schools are being run like corporations?

You might want to work for greater democracy on campus. You can demand that elected students get voting seats on your board of trustees, oppose the commercialization of education (corporate sponsorship of research, faculty chairs, sports teams, buildings, programs of study, etc.), oppose the diversion of money away from teaching into corporate-sponsored research, and support students' right to protest, petition and organize! To achieve some of these goals, you might want to follow the example of students at the University of Wisconsin in Madison (or several other campuses) who formed a coalition of progressive, ethnic, queer, and women's groups and won control of their student government allowing them to use it to achieve progressive goals.



Health Care Without Harm

Most college and university campuses generate medical wastes through campus health centers, hospitals and animal testing. This waste is either steam sterilized and put in autoclaves, or incinerated. Sometimes this is done on-site at your campus, but other times it is dumped on a people of color and/or a poor community. Incineration should be opposed because it produces dioxins and releases toxic heavy metals like mercury. Large commercial autoclaves are not always safely run either. At a public school, your administration must tell you where their waste goes, and at a private school you can pressure the waste management department into telling you. You can get the local hospital to phase out buying medical supplies that contain polyvinylchloride (PVC) or mercury and you can make sure that any medical waste is treated on-site or with a non-burn technology.

Free Burma

Many students are working in solidarity with those trying to bring freedom and democracy to Burma (a.k.a. Myanmar). In 1962 the military overthrew a democratic government and has remained in power since. Throughout their brutal rule there have been many popular resistance movements to overthrow them. In 1988 there was a democratic uprising that was brutally squashed. Burmese students in the US started a student movement, passing resolutions against the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), educating people and challenging corporations who had subsidiaries or investments in Burma (and were making money off of the repression). This is very similar to the anti-Apartheid movement of the 1980s.

SLORC has strong ties to the drug trade, using the money to finance its repression. Burma has exported as much as 50% of the world's heroin supply. Also SLORC is selling off the Burmese forests, minerals, and oil to multi-national corporations resulting in massive environmental destruction.

SEACers have been very active in working with the Free Burma Coalition and have successfully pressured Pepsico to stop doing business in Burma.

Students at University of Wisconsin - Madison pressured their campus to divest \$239,000 of Texaco stock in the spring of 1997, and that year Texaco withdrew from Burma. Ultimately we should work to support the overthrow of SLORC, and restore the democratically elected government led by Aung San Suu Kyi.



CHAPTER 5 – Launching a Campaign

A good campaign isn't just a series of unconnected events and rallies. It must be based on a coherent idea of what is going to be achieved and how to achieve it. For a campaign to succeed there must be set goals, an examination of its impact upon your organization, constituents and allies, knowledge of the opponents, targets, tactics and timelines.

The Midwest Academy's Strategy Chart is an excellent guide to developing a strategy that will ensure a good campaign or project, and this chapter is based on their organizing model. For a major campaign, your group should set aside a weekend afternoon (naturally followed by a weekend party) to flesh out all the details using this approach. The investment of time will prove well worth it in the long run.

Power

Power is not only what you have but what the enemy thinks you have.

Before you can develop a good campaign, you must understand power. Many of us think power is nasty, especially if we've been brought up in a liberal background. We think it must be bad, since the bad people have it and use it to oppress others. But the real question is who has the power, and over whom? Organizing is about redistributing power, taking it back from those who have too much of it, and giving it to the youth, the community, to the public. *Organizing is about democracy.*

There are many different forms of power. Students have people power, whereas our targets are generally rich and control institutions. Thus students will often want to mobilize people (like in a rally) and work outside of the institutions, which are often so controlled by our targets (and undemocratic) that relying solely upon them would be foolish. Occasionally students can use institutions, like the courts (or the political system) to achieve good (e.g., suing a corporation for its pollution or increasing the minimum wage). Elites might use their institutional power to remove decisions from the public realm by making them behind closed doors, arresting demonstrators, or even having dissenters brutalized (particularly in the developing world). To summarize, in your campaign, you should look at what kind of power your members and allies have, compare it to your opponents', and then pick an area where you can over-power them and win. For instance, instead of trying to outspend corporate political action committees to influence politicians in government, you should mobilize your people power by waging a public pressure campaign.

A brief note here: this chapter will sound antagonistic to those who have been socialized to "work within the system." But if there is an elite that controls most institutions and is using its power to oppress people, while the masses are relatively powerless, then we need to take action to restore a democratic balance. This is not to say that you shouldn't at least try to work within the system initially, but often achieving your goals will require conflict and working outside the system.

Also it is important to remember that you don't always have to compete against others to regain a balance of power; cooperation is often an effective means. For example, if you have allies within the administration, you are empowered by your good relationship with them.

Setting Goals

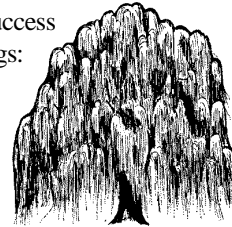
Be realistic, demand the impossible.
(May 1968)

Don't begin a campaign without setting a clear goal. Your goal is your definition of victory. You need to be able to look back over it after a set amount of time and answer the question "Have we won?" This should be defined as concretely as possible, with long-range, medium range and short-range goals. For instance:

Long range: Reduce our oil dependency.
Medium range: Shift the school to alternative energy.
Short range: Start a solar-power co-op house by the end of this year.

Now winning is great, but how you win is important to your success in the long term. Your campaigns need to accomplish three things:

- 1) Achieve concrete improvements.
- 2) Give people a sense of their own power.
- 3) Change the relations of power in society.



In other words, getting your school to start recycling is great. But you should also give campaign participants a sense that they were able to make a difference and increase the level of student input. If this is achieved, you have changed the relations of power between students and the administration. This is what moves the world closer to true democracy.

Ask yourself how your goal will fulfill these three criteria. Then consider how your organization can conduct a campaign in a way that will best achieve its goals and in the process also empower itself.

Your Organization

The campaign should also build your organization. How can this campaign create new leaders and strengthen the ones you have? How can it bring in new members? How can it involve members at a variety of levels of commitment?

You should think about how many people your project could employ. This is especially important when planning for the introductory meeting, since you want new people to get involved. If you don't involve them, they won't stick around long. There should be a range of jobs, from light to heavy, to make it easy for new people to get involved without signing their life away. Work to increase each member's level of commitment over time.

When planning a campaign it's good to list what resources your group has. You want to know the members of your group, its supporters, how much money the group has, what facilities the group can use, the group's allies, the group's connections, and its reputation. Also ask what internal problems, if any, need to be fixed before you can go forward.

Use numbers as much as possible for these things. Specific information is always better than being vague.

Constituency

It is important to know who could help your group with its campaign. Anyone who is affected by the issue that inspired your campaign or could benefit from your proposed solution is a potential ally. Some good questions to ask are:

- 1) Whose problem is it? What groups are potential allies organized in?
- 2) What would they get out of helping you? What do they have to risk in order to help you?
- 3) How could they help? What power do they have? What resources do they have to offer?

The whole point is that the more people and groups that you can involve, the more powerful you'll be. But remember that groups join for their own reasons. You need to understand their motives and needs and respect them.

Targets

A target is always a person. It is never an institution or elected body. Who are you going after anyway? Who are you trying to influence? In other words, who can give you what you want? This person is your primary target.

How can you influence him or her? What kind of power do you have to do it with? If you can't influence the target directly, who can you influence that might be able to influence your target? These people are secondary targets. They act as stepping-stones through which you can extend your power to your main target. The more secondary targets you can arrange to "en-circle" the target with, the better.



For instance, suppose you're trying to get the CEO (chief executive officer) of Splex Inc. to stop selling radioactive baby formula. Even if you can't get at him or her, stockholders can. Consumers can. The government can. If you're trying to influence a merchant, what about advertisers, distributors, suppliers and consumers? Think about all the people your targets are surrounded by through the various social connections and networks they are part of.

Tactics

Now that you have a sensible strategy in mind, you can choose your tactics.

Tactics should:

- ▣ Fit into an overall strategy. For example, if you are trying to democratize a certain process, you shouldn't use any tactics that don't have democratic support from your group. There is no way to democracy, democracy is the way!
- ▣ Make sense to your members and supporters. Don't do something that your members think is crazy.
- ▣ Be flexible and creative. If your methods fit the same old patterns, you'll get the same old responses. If possible, do something that is outside the experience of the target. Befuddle them if you can.
- ▣ Have follow-up built into them. How often have you done something, had fun doing it, and then wondered where it got you? Each step should set you up for the next one, just as a good pool player sets up for the next shot.

Consider the following when determining your tactics:

- ▣ Who are we trying to influence with this tactic? How will it influence them?
- ▣ What kind of power are we bringing into this situation? How are we applying it?
- ▣ How are we following through? How does this tactic build our power for the next step?

You need to be clear on these things if your tactic is to have any long-range impact. Is your rally to influence the public or the administration? Will the media you get from it raise awareness for an upcoming vote? Why should the President care about 100 students on her front lawn anyway?

Follow-up is especially important. Are you demanding a meeting and setting a deadline or just making some noise and walking away? What will you do if they do nothing?

Timelines

Sometimes projects drag on with no real sense of progress. To avoid this, draw up a timeline. This is simply a schedule for when you expect to get things done.

This is especially important when preparing for things with definite dates, like rallies and talks. Think carefully about all things that need to get done and when they need to get done by. Decide on a reasonable amount of time for assignments to get done by at meetings. The items on the timeline should be specific. For instance:

- ⊗ 2/7 - Assign someone to make a poster for the Toxic Buffet and get it printed.
- ⊗ 2/14 - Hand out posters, assign people to buildings and get them posted by the 17th.
- ⊗ 2/19 - Deliver press releases to local papers.
- ⊗ 2/21 - Chow Down!

Look at the student calendar before you set a timeline. Be aware of vacations, holidays, weather, major sports events, and so on. Try to avoid conflict with other people's meetings, events, and exams. Consider the student energy cycle. It peaks at the beginning of semesters and ebbs during exams.

The Strategy Chart

The Midwest Academy Strategy Chart provides a handy step-by-step checklist for planning campaigns. It is located at the end of this chapter. Let's go through the chart in detail with the following example:

The Issue

Energy Conservation in student and low-income housing apartments in Gummi Gucci.

Power

Mr. Pinkerton owns most of the apartments in town, so he basically has a monopoly. Students are the consumers. This means that both Mr. Pinkerton and the students have some economic power. The problem is that Mr. Pinkerton (a.k.a. "Pinko") makes his tenants, the students, pay the utility bills. Therefore he has no incentive to invest in energy-saving measures like insulation.

Pinko is certainly a wealthy and "honored" citizen in Gummi Gucci, so he has a lot of clout on the town council. Then again, about 40% of the population are students, so the students have some electoral power too. Pinko can spend money advertising to get good public relations, but the students can counter that with leafleting, postering, and media events.



Goals

Long-range: reduce the town's energy consumption by 20% by the year 2007.

Short-range: get Pinko to insulate his apartments.

Your Organization

You have about 10 steady members with maybe 20 more who come to meetings occasionally. You have about \$200 to spend this year on copying, mailing, phones, and so on.

Constituency

Low-income people, students, and some students' parents are paying high bills for heating in the winter and air conditioning in the summer. They could sure use a break. Local workers could also use the temporary jobs that would come from insulating all of Pinko's apartments. This means you could appeal to local labor groups. The Black, Latino, and non-traditional (students who are married, have children, or are older) student groups might be interested since these groups often have even less economic entitlement to good housing. Service organizations like Habitat for Humanity might also be interested in this campaign.

Target

Basically, Pinkerton is the one you need to influence. But if he doesn't budge, maybe the town council could pass a local law. Perhaps the renters could use their power as consumers. Encircle your primary target with secondary targets!

Tactics

You decide to begin with a friendly meeting to explain the virtues of energy conservation, its environmental effects, and how it pays off after a year or two. You explain to him how it will make his apartments more attractive to potential renters. Estimate the costs for him, and give him the names of local businesses that could do the job. Ask him to at least give the tenants rental credits for the price of insulating themselves. At the same time you could organize the tenants to request insulation or rent credit. Ask for a response within a week of your meeting.



If he refuses, start publicizing that fact and tell him you intend to do so. Mention him by name, and lament the fact that he's not willing to do this little bit to save his tenants money. Conduct a survey of the cost of utilities for various apartments, especially energy efficient ones. Compare his apartments to those of the other apartments and publicize it.

If he still refuses, you might try to get the Town Council to pass a local law saying that either: A) all utility bills should be paid by the landlord or B) tenants should get rent credit for any energy-saving investments they make in the apartment. This would actually change the economic relationships between the tenant, the property owner, and the environment!

If that fails and you have to play hardball, leaflet and poster during renting season and tell people not to rent from him.

Timeline

- Sep. 20-26: Contact potential coalition partners. Attend their meetings, try to feel out interest, and invite them to the planning meeting.
- Sep. 30: Meeting with Pinko. Representatives from each group in the coalition are invited.
- Oct. 7: Deadline for Pinko. If he does it, celebrate. If not continue with your plans.
- Oct. 10: Send out press statements from the coalition expressing dismay at Pinko's policies. Each group in the coalition should send out their own statement, but it should refer to or be signed by all of the others. Announce the beginning of a new study on neighborhood utility costs.
- Oct. 14-21: While others are working on the study, go door-to-door to all of Pinko's apartments and explain the issue to the tenants. Ask them to request insulation from him.
- Oct. 24: Announce the results of the study. Mention Pinkerton by name as the worst renter in town.
- Oct. 31: Halloween! Have someone dress as Pinko and walk through the streets burning Monopoly money.
- Nov. 3: Town Council meeting. Raise the issue and talk to sympathetic members afterward. Get on the agenda for the next meeting.
- Nov. 4: Draft a bill with coalition partners.
- Nov. 10: Bring the bill to the meeting and present it. Ask for a vote within two weeks.
- Nov. 14: Have the coalition write letters and call town council members. Get endorsements from school officials, friendly legislators and small businesses. Publicize the endorsements you receive.
- Nov. 24: The Vote. Hopefully you've won and can hold a big party.

Regrouping

What if you didn't win? You have several options. You might want to escalate your tactics so as to put enough pressure on your target for them to give in. By broadening the issue, you can build a stronger coalition on your side. You might want to try changing your main and / or secondary targets. Alternatively, you could choose an easier goal that would be a step towards getting your original one. Don't be discouraged if you lose (it happens). At least you've learned about the issue and about how to organize, and will be better prepared for the next campaign. Maybe you can use the voting power of the students to elect your own candidates to the town council. Sometimes it is worth it to fight a campaign, even if you are likely to lose because in the process you will get many people involved and transform their lives by showing them their power and turning them into activists. For instance, in the case of a war, you might not be able to stop it but by educating hundreds of people about US foreign policy you will build opposition and decrease the likelihood of future wars.



Midwest Academy Strategy Chart

After choosing your issue, fill in this chart as a guide to developing strategy. Be specific. List all the possibilities.

| Goals | Organizational Considerations | Constituents, Allies, and Opponents | Targets | Tactics |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. List the long-term objectives of your campaign. 2. State the intermediate goals for this issue campaign. What constitutes victory? <p><i>How will the campaign:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Win concrete improvements in people's lives? • Give people a sense of their own power? • Alter the relations of power? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. What short-term or partial victories can you win as steps toward your long-term goal? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. List the resources that your organization brings to the campaign. Include: money; number of staff; facilities; reputation; canvass, etc. What is the budget, including in-kind contributions, for this campaign? 2. List the specific ways in which you want your organization to be strengthened by this campaign. Fill in numbers for each. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand leadership group. • Increase experience of existing leadership. • Build membership base. • Expand into new constituencies. • Raise more money. 3. List internal problems that have to be considered if the campaign is to succeed. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who cares about this issue enough to join in or help the organization? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whose problem is it? • What do they gain if they win? • What risks are they taking? • What power do they have over the target? • Into what groups are they organized? 2. Who are your opponents? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will your victory cost them? • What will they do/spend to oppose you? • How strong are they? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Primary Targets <p>A target is always a person. It is never an institution or elected body.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who has the power to give you what you want? • What power do you have over them? 2. Secondary Targets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who has power over the people with the power to give you what you want? • What power do you have over them? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For each target, list the tactics that each constituent group can best use to make its power felt. <p>Tactics must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In context • Flexible and creative • Directed at a specific target • Make sense to the membership • Be backed up by a specific form of power. <p>Tactics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media events • Actions for information and demands • Public hearings • Strikes • Voter registration and voter education • Law suits • Accountability sessions • Elections • Negotiations |

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CHAPTER 6 – Building your Organization

Most environmental student organizations have about ten people at their meetings and are mostly white. While small groups are easy to work with, there is a limit to the progressive gains one can achieve by working with a small organization. So if you need the extra edge to win a large campaign, if you want to simultaneously tackle multiple issues, or if you want to avoid burning-out your members, then you need to develop your organization.

Building a Base

The best way to grow is by running a compelling campaign that draws people into your group. Large numbers of students will learn about your group and write their names on your sign-up sheets if you hold rallies, teach-ins, sponsor speakers, petition, and regularly table (promoting your organization and your campaigns). Whenever your group organizes a notable activity (petition, rally, educational forum), always send out press releases to both campus and off-campus media. With a little work, your organization will receive substantial media coverage, especially in smaller papers that are always looking for stories. Media coverage builds your organization's credibility and helps you recruit. Finally, build alliances with other progressive organizations (both student and community ones) by participating in their campaigns and events, and getting them to likewise participate in yours.

By being visible, you can collect a large list of people who support your group and its goals. Organize this list in either a spreadsheet or database program (like Excel or Access). You might want to include name, mailing address, email, phone, expected graduation date, skills, level of involvement (eg. in order of involvement: core member, regular attender, and supporter) and summer contact information. Some schools allow groups to create voice mail lists. While people in this larger list might not attend your meetings, they will attend rallies, films, speakers and other events.

Widening your Base

The more you communicate with your supporters, the more they will begin to share your values and be willing to assist you. Here are some tips on how to do so:

- **Media:** Get a weekly opinion column in your school newspaper and have different members write it each week. This allows you to promote your group and its campaigns to thousands of students for free.

You can also work with existing alternative media or start your own newsletter.



- **Internet:** A good webpage will get hundreds, possibly thousands of hits. You can include pictures (and even sound) from your rallies, media coverage of your organization's campaigns, and information on your major issues. Also, you can advertise your weekly meeting, list contact information for leaders and different committees and provide links to other progressive organizations (like www.seac.org). Set-up an automatic email list so that your members and supporters can have discussions about your campaigns and related issues. Ask your computing services department for assistance. Email listservs increase communication and can promote organizational democracy if a large number of people participate through them. You will probably want one email list of all of your supporters that you can use for official announcements about once or twice a week and a separate higher traffic listserv that will include discussion.

- **The Pamphlet:** use Page Maker or a word processing program to make a pamphlet that explains what environmental problems exist, what your group is doing to stop them, and how people can get involved. This all-purpose pamphlet should be distributed at all of your events, and you can even stick them in newspapers or just leave stacks lying around as a form of outreach. To save time, you can get a digital copy of the national SEAC pamphlet and modify that by including your campus-specific details.



- **Postering:** make a poster that advertises your regular (hopefully weekly) meeting and make sure that it stays up all year. You can also do issue postering (picture of a clear-cut, an environmental cartoon, a landfill, etc) to raise awareness.

Deepening your members' commitment

Use your larger list of contacts to recruit new members through personal contact. Call people or organize a short visit with students who showed interest in your organization at club day, from tabling, or at an event or rally. Learn what their interests and skills are and find an easy and productive way for them to help with your group's work.

The beginning of the school year is a good time to spend a Saturday or Sunday discussing the group's vision and creating a strategic plan for the year. Set aside a large chunk of time (like six hours). Choose issues, assign responsibility for tasks and create a timeline. By being strategic and building internal community, your organization will achieve far more than most other clubs.

At different times during the year, you might want to organize training sessions to increase the skill level of your members. Your group specialists should spend an hour teaching everyone else how they write press releases, speak in front of crowds, handle your administrative bureaucracy, facilitate meetings, make sense of the group's campaign, etc. Encourage new people to take on positions of responsibility.

Ultimately y'all need to get arrested and spend a couple nights in jail together, sit in your administration building, or go on long road-trips to a protest, conference, National Council meeting or Summer Training Camp to really build up an earth-shaking commitment to your group and the movement.

One thing that will help develop capacity is to create paid work-study jobs doing activist work. If you can find someone who you can count as a supervisor (either a sympathetic professor or someone working in a friendly non-profit organization), then you can set-up work study jobs where 75% (or more) of the wages will be paid by the government! If you donate a quarter of your wages back to SEAC, then it effectively costs the organization nothing to hire you – and you get an exciting and important job doing field organizing, writing a newsletter or whatever you were hired to do for your local, state, or regional SEAC network.

Keeping Records

Once you've done all these things make sure to keep good records (press clippings, pictures, minutes, etc) for the use of future activists. By keeping archives you can develop a history of student activism at your university that will be useful in detecting patterns in administration behavior (ex.: You can learn valuable tidbits of information like that the administration almost agreed to pay 15% extra to buy recycled paper in 1995 because the faculty senate voted to support it). You can also use your archives to justify your application for a larger organizational budget (to student government). While money cannot do many things, it is useful to have a large enough budget to cover basic materials, SEAC membership and conference registration, publicity expenses and to occasionally bring in a speaker. If you cannot get enough money from student government, you can also turn to students (sell T-shirts, hold benefit concerts and parties) or faculty (ask for donations).



CHAPTER 7 – Mobilizing Students

Now that you have a strong group and have chosen a campaign, here are some tactics you might want to employ.

Your Rights

Firstly you should know what your rights are. If you attend a private school, you are generally screwed as you do not have the legal right to freedom of speech or association. Those rights do not apply to people operating in the private realm and that is how the courts have interpreted universities (despite the fact that since the general public is allowed on campus they are only ‘quasi-public’). So private universities can do whatever they want to you for rallying, leafleting, petitioning, etc. Your organization can be banned if they don’t like you. Fortunately there is a vast difference between what your rights are and what you can get away with. For instance, activists at the University of Notre Dame chalk the sidewalks all the time. Chalking is not permitted by any rule in the student handbook, however it is also not explicitly banned and if you do it late at night and dodge security you won’t get hassled. Likewise the unrecognized Notre Dame queer student group puts up posters even though they aren’t allowed to meet on campus. The more people you have at your activity (and the more media), the less likely you’ll get penalized for rule breaking. Colleges have a hard time standing up to public scrutiny and embarrassment, since their enrollment depends on their reputation.

The point in breaking rules (ex.: if you had a rule that requires that all rallies must be registered in advance), is not to have fun being deviant, but to create a situation where the rules are not being enforced, are ultimately removed, and students achieve unhindered free speech. Then your campus will be a safe environment for activism.

Public school students have the right to protest, leaflet, petition and form organizations. The university can put reasonable restrictions as to the time and place, and even require advance notice, but they cannot ban you because they dislike your activism. This even goes for public high schools.

Older students should pass-on stories about past administrative attempts to censor their activities. At many universities you will detect a persistent pattern of administrative actions to maintain control over activists by limiting their activities.

Morally you should be able to do whatever it takes, outside of violence or anything that would destroy the integrity of your organization, to achieve justice. Peacefully filling the administration building and sitting-in until they give in to your demands, blocking a building, or having everyone strike are all useful tactics if your supporters are ready to do them and you have demonstrated to the general public the righteousness of your cause.

Choosing Tactics

Generally campaigns go through several phases:

1. Ask nicely: You try to meet with the people who can make the change you want and either can't get a meeting or you have a meeting and are denied your wishes. (This is an exercise that you must go through in order to be able to say later that you tried the "just ask them and they'll listen" approach and it didn't work.)
2. Action and Education: These go hand-in-hand. You educate people about the problem and try to gain mass support by holding rallies, using petitions, holding public hearings, flyer-ing students on campus, writing letters-to-the-editor of the campus paper, bringing in speakers, etc.
3. Negotiations: After you've shown your strength your target should be more willing to negotiate. However, they will probably stall.
4. Either you win or you'll need to intensify the campaign. Experiment with different tactics and keep up the heat.

You must have a target. This has to be an individual as bureaucracies will 'pass the buck'. You need concrete demands that this individual will have the power to grant.

Are you a running a majority campaign or minority one? Majority campaigns rely upon educating the majority of people to support you in theory, whether or not they do it explicitly. If you have 70% support you will be limited in the tactics you can choose (militant rallies chanting, "1 2 3 4 Poverty is Class War, 5 6 7 8 Organize to Smash the State" are definitely out – vandalism might be out too). However, you will also have a better chance of winning. The alternative is to mobilize a small group of really committed people and rely upon the neutrality or apathy of the masses. A minority could exert substantial pressure by occupying a building, sitting in trees threatened with logging, or holding weekly protests which cause your target to negotiate (and/or give-in) just to get rid of you. Generally majority campaigns are best. You can keep your supporters on your side, even if you all get arrested, if you effectively communicate how important your issue is.

In what environment will the tactics be used? (conservative, liberal, apathetic) If you are trying something that violates rules, how tolerant are the security or police? What happened the last time your organization (or another one) tried this tactic?

Be creative.



Educational Tactics

First, ask nicely and smile. If that doesn't work, don't hesitate to have sit-ins on the university president's home lawn the next day (unless they just sprayed some nasty pesticides...). This is a survey of possible tactics. Depending on your situation, some of these tactics might seem too radical and drastic, or too moderate and ineffective. Pick what seems right.

Canvassing

This means knocking on people's doors. If you want to build your organization, you should canvass on campus. If you want to build community ties or raise money, you should go off campus. You could ask people to write a letter or postcard, educate them about an upcoming election, tell them about a local fight against an incinerator or raise money. If you want to ask for money, you need a permit; contact the town clerk. Canvassing is a form of free speech, so they have to give you one; hopefully they'll be friendly.

To canvass, you need a Rap. This is structured, yet flexible and open, "speech" you give to the people you talk to. Every rap at every door is different, but they all include the basic same elements. These should probably include:

- ä Who you are
- ä What your group is
- ä Legitimization of your group (why should they care?)
- ä Discussion of an issue, or ask them what they're concerned about
- ä Here's a sample letter they can write (for instance)
- ä A request for a contribution (optional)

It might go like "Hi, I'm China and I'm with Chambana SEAC. We're in your neighborhood today seeking community input and support. We worked last year on improving the mass transit system, and now we're trying to clean up our water supply. Do you have any concerns about our water? Can you think of other issues that we should work on?"

This is the part that makes you unique—you're a local group that is actually interested in their input. It also sets up a very nice two-way communication.

"We're working to build a local network of groups to work on these issues. If you could make a contribution, that would be great." By that point they'll be falling over themselves (maybe) giving you money. You should also tell people about upcoming meetings.



Once you've got the rap down, you can ad-lib. Some canvassing tips:

- * Look decent—appeal to everybody.
- * A clipboard makes you look really good, gives you something to write on, and gives you something to put in their hands. This seems to be really effective, especially if it has a form on the top with the names of some of their neighbors, showing that they've been contributing. It might look like a "Statement of Support" with columns like Name, Address, Amount, and Comments.
- * Professional-looking background material on whatever issue you're working on, to impress them.
- * To train, you should "role-play." Take turns being the canvasser and canvasee. Play being friendly, skeptical, stony-faced, and downright hostile. Sure it'll feel embarrassing and awkward, but how much worse will it be with strangers in their bathrobes? Keep at it until you feel comfortable.
- * When you do finally go out, pair up. Two people feel more confident and can back each other up when one of them stumbles. (Apparently a woman and a man together get the best response.) Also, new people should go out with more experienced people, and should discuss what happened after each door. Canvassing is one of those things with a lot of little learned skills to pick up.
- * **KEEP GOOD RECORDS!** Just as with phone calling, you need to keep track of where you've been, what they said, if they were interested, and so on. Your records need to be good enough so that others can pick up where you left off, so don't rely on your memory and don't leave your friends scraps of paper to decipher.

Note a few good points about canvassing. A lot of big organizations hire students to canvass, pay them a cut, fire them unless they make \$100 a day and give them no involvement whatsoever in the group. This is hardly the way to run a democratic, cynicism-free organization. So if you want to canvass the SEAC way:

- * Have your own members, bona fide activists, do the canvassing.
- * Just collect as much as people feel comfortable with—don't set a quota.
- * Don't avoid low-income neighborhoods just because you can't raise money there. You can still petition, educate, and activate.
- * Take people's ideas on local projects seriously and get back to them. This is what makes you a lot more attractive than some big national group cruising through the town.

Dorm Education

You might want to go into dorms yourselves and give brief presentations on recycling, economic globalization, environmental racism, etc. Contact your RAs or the Housing Office and arrange to be at a floor meeting or a social event—they're always looking for programs.

Some groups have established “ambassadors” or “environmental representatives” in each dorm, to teach people about things like recycling and conservation, to make sure they’re going well. This can be very useful.

Leaflets

Leaflets might include any of the following: information on an issue, arguments for your position, suggestions for action, sources, references for further reading, announcement of a rally or event (especially emergency rallies) or information on when and where your group meets. Leafletting gets to people who would not stop at your information table.

Leaflet tips:

- At a busy time, one person can hand out several hundred per hour. A lot will be thrown away immediately—you might be able to retrieve these and reuse them. You can have a box nearby with a sign for discards. Again, recycled paper helps avoid cynical comments.
- For mass distribution of a simple message, you could use smaller flyers, for instance ¼ or 1/6 size.
- Be friendly but aggressive—step forward and hand it to people, saying “here, can I give you one of these?” “important information,” “stop environmental destruction!” etc. Always smile and look people in the eyes as you’re handing them things.
- Have several people there, to catch people moving in all directions. Besides, single leafletters look lonely and insecure, and probably feel that way too.
- Don’t spend too much time debating people who have strong opposite opinions. It’s generally a waste of time, though it can alleviate the monotony of leafletting.

Posters

Text should be clear and concise. Use a contrast of fonts and typstyles (bold, italics, etc.) to draw the eye. Graphics and cartoons are great too, but don’t crowd it too much – you need some white space. Show it to someone clueless and see if they get it. If they don’t, make it simpler.



Try creating a shanty town.

Poster Tips:

- ✧ The lettering needs to be solid enough to be readable from 10-20 feet away. You might want to black it in with a marker by hand—hand-done posters can be catchier.
- ✧ Funky colors are good eye-catchers, but aren't that great for the environment. Recycled paper increases your credibility and solid black on unbleached cream color can stand out well.
- ✧ If you do a series of lectures, they need individual posters and don't make them in the same style—at a glance, people will think they saw them already.
- ✧ For letter or phone campaigns, you could make a poster cut into strips at the bottom that people can tear off and take home (like a "for rent" poster) giving the phone number or address and what to say. This worked for us on the Clean Air Act – at least a lot of them were torn off!
- ✧ Make a poster that can be used throughout the semester to advertise your weekly meetings.
- ✧ Be creative about where you post—insides of bathroom stalls, garbage cans, "alternative" hangouts, etc. Be inclusive too. Don't ignore an area because you think no one would be interested.
- ✧ Just handing posters out at a meeting and asking people to put them up doesn't work very well. Assign people to specific buildings or areas of town, and tell them when it needs to go up. As usual, the more specific the task, the more likely it will get done.
- ✧ People should carry about extras to replace those torn down.
- ✧ It is especially important for posters to be up the day of the event (especially for things like rallies), so you might consider doing a second round beforehand.
- ✧ If your posters are always torn down you might want to wheatpaste them. Mix: wall paper glue, flour, and water. Apply it with a brush. Note this should only be done outside and you may be risking arrest.
- ✧ Be sure to advertise your group as well as your event.
- ✧ ALWAYS have someone else proofread it.
- ✧ Be prepared to shrug off snide comments. Don't let them dampen your cheerful enthusiasm!
- ✧ If you give facts, cite your sources.

Orientation

This is your best chance to reach large numbers of students when they first arrive, and when they're especially receptive. Distribute information on recycling, energy conservation, local issues, and progressive courses. Some groups distribute "Dis-orientation Guides" that explain what campaigns are going on, some history of student action on campus, what progressive groups exist, cool things going on in the local community, and other information that a school administration won't include in their orientation.

Polls and Referendums

If you need to demonstrate how much support you have for a campaign, you can do a poll or a referendum. Develop a simple unbiased question (ex. Should the university spend \$50,000 to do an environmental audit of its practices?). Choosing random people from the telephone directory will work well for a poll (ex.: ask every 20th person). Polling 200 people will give you an accurate result. You should release the poll's results in a press release.

Most universities will let you put an issue to referendum by including it on the student government election ballot. Referendums have more credibility than polls, but they may be more work.

Speakers

Get a well-known professor or an outside speaker to give a talk. SEAC's Speakers' Bureau is an excellent source of grassroots activists (www.seac.org/speakers). Only the audience will be directly affected, but the press you'll get and the fact the talk occurred gives your group and the issue visibility and prestige, as well as a new contact in academia or elsewhere. Make sure that the speaker is on a topic that builds your group's campaigns.

If the atmosphere is right, do something with all the people there. Don't let "political capital" go to waste. Get them to write letters, sign up for an activity, or fundraise. Hold a small group meeting after the speaker to draw people into your group.

Tabling

This means setting up a table in a central location, sitting there or standing in front of it, and enticing people to come have a look. This gives you a chance to talk to passers-by, tell them about your group, get them to write letters (try to get them to write it there or they won't do it), sell buttons and T-shirts, sign petitions, and whatever else. Ideally get them to join the group. Always have a sign up sheet for your group mailing list! Put up a colorful banner to attract them, and spread literature over the table so that the titles show. Dining halls, student unions, outside on warm days, and events are good places to get a crowd.

Don't just sit behind a table with literature on it (juggle, breathe fire, sing, shout revolutionary slogans); tabling should be dynamic and interpersonal. Ask passersby a question: "Should our school invest in corporations that kill indigenous people?" As with canvassing it's good to work in pairs, with a more experienced person training someone new. You can train by doing some role-playing with each other—coming up to the table, acting bored, interested, antagonistic, whatever. One effective method is to have one person catching the flow of people and directing them to the table, while the other person talks to them in detail, signs them up, etc.



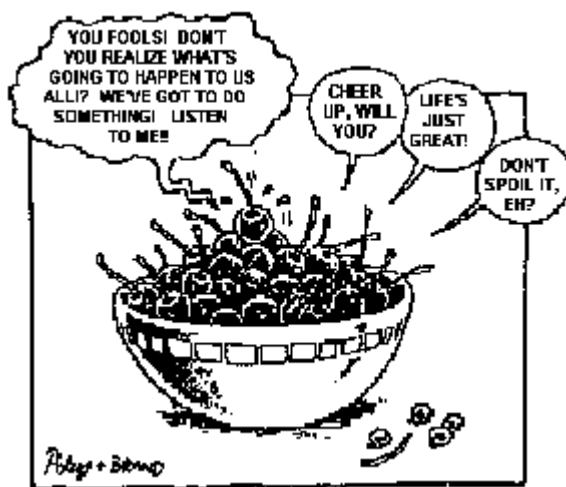
Tabling is a good way to involve new people and build a sense of group identity; do it weekly, if you can. As with leafleting, make sure that people who are signed up are sure they'll come, and that the first batch knows where to pick up the materials and where to leave them when done.

A few tabling tips:

- If you're signing people up for something, put a name or two at the top. Nobody likes to be the first.
- If you do collect money, put it in a visible jar—and put a few dollars in to start it out.
- Have a stack of your group pamphlets.
- Don't spend too long talking to kooks or shooting the breeze with one of the converted.
- Never (or almost never, especially in heavy traffic areas) petition for two things at once. It's very confusing.
- Clipboards are very useful for collecting signatures and working the crowd (free of the table).
- FREE CANDY does wonders in attracting people

Teach-ins

Teach-ins are useful for providing an array of opinions about a timely issue. They can be as short as having a single speaker, but are often an afternoon or daylong. They are most useful if organized swiftly in reaction to an event (wars, racist incident, environmental disaster). You can also use it build momentum around your campaign. To ensure good attendance, you need to choose an issue which a lot of people have heard about (either through the mainstream media or because your group has made a lot of noise), but want to know more about. A possible format is to break up your time into 30 minute segments, giving each speaker fifteen minutes to talk and fifteen minutes to take questions and for the audience to debate (both the speaker and amongst itself). Have drinks and snacks to encourage people to stay and talk.



Voter Registration, Education, and Third Parties

One way for students to exercise power is to vote for progressive candidates. However, most students don't vote because they haven't registered. So a useful tactic can be to register students to vote, and then educate them about the different candidates' stances on environmental and social issues. Even better, run your own candidates!



A major shortcoming of our political system is that corporations control both the Democrats and Republicans. Corporations put profit before the environment and people, and so do both major parties. For instance, Clinton supported cutting welfare benefits, the North American Free Trade Agreement (which allows corporations to challenge government environmental regulations as 'barriers to free trade'), so called 'salvage' logging (a disguised successful attempt to double logging on our national forests), and tax cuts for the rich (Ex.: a capital gains cut). If you don't want to compromise your beliefs working for the Republicrats, then you should consider supporting one of the small, but growing, progressive alternatives. The Greens are most closely linked to the environmental movement, and have an international network of parties. Several SEACers have run as Greens Party candidates. One currently sits on the Santa Fe city council as a Green, and another SEACer was elected in Chapel Hill, NC. Other important progressive parties are the New Party (they often work to support progressive Democrats), or the NDP and New Politics Initiative if you live in Canada.



Flying activist protests Bush's inauguration.

Action Tactics

Banner Drops

Drop a banner from a high spot. Big Banner. Good photo-op. Note possibility of arrest. (See section below on civil disobedience.)

Bird-dogging

This is the art of hijacking a media event that your target organized with the intention of using it for your own purposes. A small group of activists can infiltrate an event with a hidden banner (like attending an election rally with an “Nuclear Executives for Bush” banner), releasing it at a strategic time. One or two activists should leaflet the crowd explaining why you protested, and handle the questions from the media. An advantage is that all of the media work that your opponent did will be used to your advantage.

Chalking

Get a couple buckets of sidewalk chalk and decorate campus. Chalking is cheap, fun, creative, and effective. Some schools don’t like it, but it’s pretty harmless and if you do it late at night, you’ll avoid scrutiny. You can use it to educate, advertise, or put pressure on your administration Ex .: by chalking a critique of a university policy the night before a lot of alumni or parents are visiting campus).

Civil Disobedience

Nonviolent direct action has a long and honorable history—from Gandhi and Martin Luther King to Thoreau. The Civil Rights movement didn’t begin with a letter writing campaign: it took off when Rosa Parks refused to move from her seat in the white section of the bus and when people sat in at segregated lunch counters in the South.

There’s a wide range of opinion on what tactics are necessary to win the battle over our environment. There’s a lot more to civil disobedience than we could possibly put in this guide; it’s a big decision, and one that group should discuss very carefully. If you choose to do direct action, prepare yourself and your group for what you’re getting into.

- Build unity by agreeing beforehand on guidelines and principles for the action.
- Try to get non-violence training from community groups in your area, or SEAC can help find someone.
- Know what to do if you are arrested.
- Assign people in advance who are willing to be arrested, others who will join them with a legal demonstration (in which they will not risk arrest), and a police liaison to coordinate and deal with police in as friendly and neutral a way as possible.



Creativity

Here are some other wild and wacky things people have done:

- Putting pollution tickets on congresspeople's cars with info about the Clean Air Act.
- Collecting a day's worth of styrofoam and building an enormous "styro-monster" in the middle of the school.
- Having 100 people (including faculty and administrators) carry their trash for a week.
- Marking campus trees for destruction, with attached leaflets describing clear-cutting in the Pacific Northwest.
- Students upset about the lack of racial diversity at Rutgers took out a truckload of books from the library (on Western Civilization) to show how they felt not having their culture respected.
- Radical Cheerleaders with (optional) outfits, spirit, and radical cheers.
- Mail back lots of blank credit card applications so that the campus junk mailers get their junk back and have to pay the postage. For extra fun attach a brick.

Don't get stuck in a rut. The old ways get boring—we need you to come up with new ones! Be visible, unconventional, and rock the world! And tell us what you're doing. We'll put it in Threshold so everybody else in SEAC can read all about it.

Disruption

This means shutting down the normal operations of something. It is not necessarily illegal—it might just be clever. For instance (from SASU's *Organizing on the Campus*, by Bruce Conin):

Bank on Brooklyn organized 200 of their members to go to the target bank at the same time and deposit one dollar. The next day, they all went together again and closed their accounts. The bank manager knew what was going on, but could do nothing to stop it. The people, in effect, legally occupied and shut down bank operations for two days.

You can also try the "Zap Fax"—20 pages of form letters signed by people opposing the corporation's practice taped together to tie up their fax line. Faxing pages of black paper tied in a circle has been known to burn out the ink in the target's fax machine. Or the "phone-in". Have 100 people call all the numbers in the Administration building, over and over, in shifts.

Electronic Civil Disobedience

While the following tactics could antagonize your supporters and should be used carefully (if at all) you could hack a target's webpage, replacing it with your own information (U.S. government pages are often targeted), hold a web sit-in (people from all over the world set their browser so that you access the page every second or so, this causes other people to be unable to visit it), flood (a.k.a. 'spam') their email account with junk, or plain hack into their computer system (or voice mail) to find information that can be leaked to the press. Do everything anonymously. Note that hacking is illegal, risky, and requires special skills.

Fasts or Hunger-Strikes

While not eating does not directly exerting power over a target, hunger strikes can be useful by demonstrating your commitment and will cause inactive people to join in on your side. It can also be an effective way of getting media coverage. It might cause your target to grant your demand, rather than see people suffer (and risk their health) because she or he is refusing to give in. Most people can go without (any) food for several days without major consequences other than fatigue however for longer periods you'll want to consult a doctor. If you are going on an unlimited hunger strike, have some leaders not join, so that they will have enough energy to organize support behind your struggle. Be sure to drink lots of water. Be aware that there are many people who deprive themselves of food because they have eating disorders and be very cautious that you are not promoting that. Fasting is a traditional non-violent tactic that has been used by women suffragists, Gandhi, Dorothy Day, political prisoners and others. If you are going on a prolonged hunger strike (more than 1-3 days), read up on it first, so you know what you're doing.

Letter-writing

We need to write letters constantly, to legislators and corporate heads. A personally written letter is much better than a form letter or a postcard—handwritten is better than typed. A good letter states its case quickly and concisely. Don't write a lengthy essay, they won't read it.

You can get people to write letters by tabling or canvassing, but it's even easier to take 5 minutes at a meeting and have everyone write one. Normally politicians will write you a reply, trying to make themselves look good on the issue even if they totally oppose your position (you need to read through the lines). A letter to a Representative or Senator might look like this:

Oct 5, 2002

The Honorable Dope Embexel
House of Representatives [or U.S. Senate]

Dear Representative [or Senator] Embexel:

I am writing to urge you to support H.R. 292 which will end the taxpayer subsidized logging of our national forests. There is enough wood available from private lands to leave our national forests untouched. Furthermore, the use of hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars to subsidize large forest corporations is totally unjustifiable.

I know that you are a strong supporter of the environment and appreciated your vote in support of the Western Colorado Wilderness Act (*give them a compliment*).

I look forward to your reply.

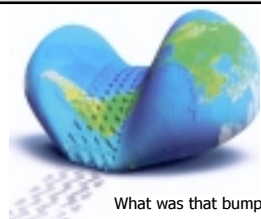
Sincerely,
[your name]
[your address]

Letters to the editor, of publications large and small, are another good idea. Often you can email them, but hand-delivering them increases your chances of getting them printed. Type them (double-spaced), including your name, address, and phone number. Generally, letters must be short; however look at what they publish and keep it within that size. Make it punchy and readable. The list of letters waiting to be printed is often quite long, so don't be upset if your letter is delayed a few days. If it's a school paper, you can time it (and/or make a request) so that they print it on a specified date (like the day before your big rally!). Longer opinion pieces are also very useful, if you can get them printed. School and small city papers will print a large percent of the letters they receive – so write!

Lobbying: Politicians, Administrators, etc.

This is a lot of fun, although in Congress you usually get a staffer instead of the Congressperson, even though you traveled thousands of miles, sigh... Often groups sponsor Lobby Days at the state and national level, and feel free to go yourself any chance you get. Your representative may have a local office near you as well. Here are some dos and don'ts:

- State, in a friendly manner, that you represent a student environmental group.
- State your case concisely: “We’re concerned that S.666 is being weakened too far. We’d like you to introduce an amendment to protect all whistle-breasted throat catchers, not just the ones with Ph.Ds.”
- Try to get a commitment on a vote, co-sponsorship, or whatever; if they haven’t decided yet, ask them for a date you can get back to them.
- Don’t lie. If you don’t know something, say “I’ll get back to you on that.” You can write a letter later.
- Discuss the issue if you like, but don’t get sucked into a complicated argument. State your case and stick to it.
- Don’t threaten or brag, like: “If you don’t vote for this, I’ll boot you out of office this fall.” It’ll get you nowhere.
- Don’t bargain, like: “If you vote for this, I’ll work for you in the fall.”
- Don’t question their motives, like: “It seems to me you’re actually a tool of the coal industry.” Everybody, even Ronald Reagan, thinks they’re an environmentalist—the point is to draw on that, not attack it.
- If your group is non-profit (a.k.a. 501(c) (3)) you’re not supposed to spend more than 20% of your budget lobbying.



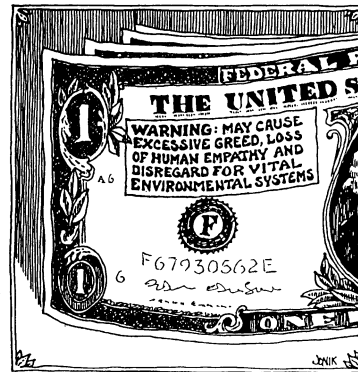
What was that bump?

You can also call people and harangue them—this is probably the easiest way to reach someone. For Congress, call the Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121 (or 225-3121 for the Senate) and ask for your representative. You'll be connected to a staffer at his or her office, and they'll take a message. It's especially effective to have everyone call on the same day.

Petitions

Petitions are the time-honored way of showing anybody that the public supports you and can also be a tool for introducing people to an issue. There's a tradeoff between how thorough a statement it has on it and how many signatures you'll get. We suggest a paragraph or two, tops, in large print. If you get lots of signatures on a general statement, you can use it to back up a more detailed demand.

We've found that rather than assigning a few people to sit at a table and collect signatures, it's more efficient for everyone in the group to get in on the act, and collect 20 or so signatures per week (or more if you can) from friends, people in their dorms, etc. Give people a basic rap to say, hand out the petitions at a meeting and send them off! Or you can use clip boards and stand in a high traffic area (like in front of a building before classes), and ask everyone walking by if they want to sign.



As with other kinds of sign-up sheets, it's good to put yourself and a few friends at the top of the sheet so nobody has to be the first. Keep the original petition and send copies of it to your target(s).

If you're a masochist, or do a lot of petitions and rallies, you might want to add everyone who signs up to your rarely used BIG mailing list. Because if someone signs a petition to save a forest, they'd likely want to attend a rally to support getting the school to use recycled paper. With databases, spreadsheets, and email or voicemail lists this can be done without too much work and prove very useful in the future.

There is no such thing as an email petition. They're effectively chain letters and they are not effective.

Don't forget to ask petition signers to come to your next meeting—and remember to get lots of press for your hard work!

Phone calling

You can also call people on your phone list to try and get them to do something. If you want to do something big like hold a rally or go to a conference, you should do two rounds of calls.

The key here is to keep good records on who you've reached, left a message with, etc. This is vital both for your own peace of mind and so others can pick up where you left

If several people are working on it, write out a script (a.k.a. "rap") to go through ("Hi, I'm Keegan from People Against Everything. We're organizing a rally on Monday to protest a landfill, the lack of recycling, our administration, and . . .) so people will feel more confident and won't forget major points; just as with canvassing, people can practice on each other until they feel confident.

If you leave a message with a roommate, give them your number—that way you know they'll actually write the message down, instead of just trying to remember it. If they have an answering machine, it might actually be better to ask them to let it answer the call so you can leave a detailed message.

Proposals

Environmental issues are complex; to be effective, you have to be in command of the facts. Sure you want your school to get recycled paper: but your demand has more weight if you know the distributors, prices, and other schools that did the same. Not only is this impressive, but your school might not actually have that information and you remove an excuse for them to stall. By showing your competence and determination, you are more likely to get a reply of similarly high caliber. Proposals should be backed up by petitions, polls, rallies, and support from friendly faculty and even administrators. Don't go overboard and spend all of your time on research, as you also need to organize student support for them to succeed.

Public Hearings

To promote the democratic process, host a hearing or speak-out to have students voice their concerns. Invite administrators, set the agenda, and let them hear the students' voices. Ask the administrators to meet your demands. Write down whether they support, oppose, or waffle on a large piece of paper. Make it a media event. If the targets don't show up, make an issue of it. Fake chickens or at least empty chairs with names on them are good stand-ins for targets who fail to show up.

You should also attend hearings held by the town or school to show your support of an issue. Bring lots of members. Designate spokespeople and plan a set of questions or statements. Be polite if you want but don't let the agenda get taken away from you. If Administrators try to control the agenda and format of the meeting from the start, it might be better to not meet with them, rather than having an undemocratic meeting where your group cannot make its point.

Rallies

The purpose of a rally is to show your level of support to your target, to invigorate your supporters and to attract media attention to bring new people into the campaign. Rallies can include chanting, signs, banners, music, marching, poetry, drumming, street theater, impassioned speeches, humor, presenting petitions and anything else you like. The advertising could and should include:

- * Press releases to papers, radio, and TV (with follow-up)
- * Announcements in classes and to other groups
- * Chalking on the sidewalks and blackboards
- * Mailings to your mailing list, calls to your phone list, and emails.
- * Posters

Develop a sensible time-line and make sure everything gets done on time, with people assigned to specific tasks—as usual, you can do a good job at a reasonable pace with a lot of people, or a bad job frantically with just a few. It's especially important to have some last-minute advertising the day of the rally—chalk on the sidewalks the night before, leaflet the day of, etc.

Rallies usually begin with a short introduction by an MC and then a series of speeches, chants, music, and so on. Some things to help rallies go well:

- ✧ Keep speakers on strict time limits that you warn them about in advance. Have a fearless MC signal 'timeout' if they go over.
- ✧ Use the rally to promote your group. You deserve the reward for organizing it.
- ✧ If it's outside, remember to put a rain location on the posters.
- ✧ Have a good diversity of speakers (gender, race, etc.) and don't rely again and again on the same good speakers. New people need to develop those skills too, and they'll have a blast. Trust them.
- ✧ Have several people designated as representatives to the press.



Press tips:

- ä Find them—don't wait for them to find you. Control the media, instead of letting them control you.
- ä Have several “sound bites” ready beforehand. Saying these, and repeating them if necessary, is a higher priority than answering the reporter's questions (sad, but true).
- ä Don't make long-winded speeches; they'll be edited to death.
- ä A press packet prepared beforehand with detailed information might help.
- ä Do what you can to make the audience well informed—it looks bad for them to say, “Well, uh, I guess I came cause, well, yah know, I'm really concerned about the earth.”
- ä Getting people to crowd together and having colorful banners in the background will make for good pictures.
- ä Have a few marshals on hand to direct the crowd, lead chants, and so on.
- ä Make the rally visually attractive—lots of signs and banners, T-shirts with slogans, costumes and theater and so on. You can cheaply make full color T-shirts with color inkjet printers, an iron, and T-shirt transfer paper (\$1.50 a sheet). How about a nighttime march, carrying torches? Ooooh!

Socially Responsible Investing

As stockholders and leading social institutions, colleges and universities are in a powerful position to challenge corporations. Our schools must use their power as shareholders to demand that corporations stop socially and environmentally destructive activities. Our schools should publicly disclose what they invest in, so that they are subject to public scrutiny. They should pressure corporations to reform harmful practices, firstly by shareholder activism (voting on shareholder resolutions), and secondly by divesting from corporations, if needed. Shareholder activism and divestment are good tactics to use as UW Madison students learned when in the spring of 1997 they got their school to divest \$239,000 of Texaco stock, and that same year Texaco withdrew from an important oil project in Burma (the oil revenue would have helped fund the brutal SLORC dictatorship)! Ultimately, you want your university to adopt a set of socially responsible principles governing its investments and a democratically chosen committee to enforce them.



Sit-Ins

Sit-ins are a tactic that first gained popularity in the Thirties in the labor movement, then in the Sixties in the Civil Rights movement. They have recently gained notoriety for their successful use by the student anti-sweatshop movement. Occupying (or sitting-in) a building is one of the strongest non-violent forms of action that a group can take. By sitting in your school president's office, or an important part of the administration building (or the office of a politician or corporation), you exert power over your target by reducing its ability to operate. When you directly attack and challenge an institution's control system, the result can be anything from confusion, to intense hostility, to capitulation. You risk punishment and arrest, but by acting boldly you will get extensive media coverage and greatly increase the likelihood of negotiations and their success.



Notre Dame students hold an impromptu sit-in to add sexual orientation to the university's nondiscrimination clause

You should not hold a sit-in until you have worked through the initial stages of educating people and holding one or more protests. A sit-in is a last resort, and should not be done out of the blue. However, if after having worked on an issue for a substantial period, you are hitting your head against a brick administrative (or corporate or political) wall, then the time might be ripe to strike your target at the heart.

You'll need a core group of people to start the effort. Organize a series of meetings over the course of which you introduce and discuss the sit-in option. Don't force reluctant people to commit, but over a couple weeks build up a list of people willing to sit-in. Get them to sign a pledge and repeatedly verify that they are comfortable doing so. Aim for group consensus on the decision to sit-in. Members who do not want to sit-in will hopefully be supportive of those who do, and you need some activists on the outside to organize rallies in your support. Discuss what you will do if security tells you to leave. Scout out the site. It should be strategic (a site of power), ideally near the center of campus (where you can gather supporters), and large enough to accommodate your group of people for a couple days or more.

To avoid security stopping you before you can get in the building, you should keep the discussion of doing a sit-in off all email lists (especially details of date and time). Rely upon word-of-mouth, calling people and group meetings.

Here is a list of things to bring:

- Backpacks
- Food and water
- Deodorant (and other personal hygiene items)
- Blankets, sleeping bags, pillows
- Books, cards, homework
- Cameras
- Signs
- Laptops
- Buckets: if you are unsure that you will have bathroom access.
- Cellular phone(s): to call outside supporters and the media
- List of outside supporters and media to call
- Scanner radio: for \$50-\$100 you can buy a handheld scanner that will let you listen to your security and city police, hopefully giving you advance warning before they take any action (though using it to do so is slightly illegal).
(Tip: Try www.grove-ent.com for scanner. Also you should be able to find a list of frequencies on the web.)
- Reporter(s): the more reporters present, the better you will get treated by your target (the more likely they are to negotiate and grant your demands).

Don't overpack.

You might have the freedom to come and leave, in which case you can arrange to deliver assignments and stay on top of your courses. Leave the space neat and tidy. Don't punish the underpaid secretaries and janitors who will have to clean up any mess you leave.



Michigan students sit-in to oppose sweatshops

First make a list of local, alternative, and national media outlets. You'll want the news and education desks. For important events, fax out a press advisory early on (a week or two before). Send out your first press release three days before, following up with a phone call to pitch the story and make sure they saw it. On the day (or night) of an event, call to see if they are covering it. If they forgot about it, fax them another copy of your press release.

Many computers come with fax modems, which allow you to program your computer to automatically send your word-processed press release to all of your media contacts. Fax modems are cheap and very useful.

A press release should clearly include the reasons for the event, your demands, when, where (and how to get there), who will be there, quotes from your members, list two or more spokespersons (who will be easily accessible by phone).

If you don't exist in the media, for all practical purposes you don't exist.
(Daniel Schorr)

For example:

| |
|---|
| <p>PRESS RELEASE</p> <p>Progressive Student Alliance 314 La Fortune Center, University of Notre Dame Notre Dame, IN 46556</p> <p>For more information contact: Aaron Kreider, Fast Coordinator, 419-634-4346 Tim Byrne, Public Relations Director, 419-332-1284</p> <p>FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE</p> <p>Notre Dame Students Go On Hunger Strike for Gay Rights</p> <p>Notre Dame, Indiana — February 1-5, 1999</p> <p>Over a hundred students at the University of Notre Dame will be going on a three-day hunger strike in support of gay rights at the Catholic university. The fast will last from Wednesday, February 3, until Friday, February 5. This is part of a week of activities on campus which aims to show student support for including sexual orientation as a protected category in the university's non-discrimination clauses and to pressure the Board of Trustees who plan to vote about it on Friday.</p> <p>"It's very frustrating. All this work, and finally it comes down to a showdown between this small, unresponsive, cabal of administrators versus a large majority of faculty and students," said David Hartwig, a member of the Progressive Student Alliance (PSA).</p> |
|---|

The rest of the press release contained a short history of the issue, emphasizing how critical the Board of Trustees meeting was, the level of homophobia on campus,

more arguments (in the form of quotes), and ended with a listing of events (photo-ops!) that were part of the week of action that the press might want to cover. While the students lost the battle, the story was covered in the national media (and even in the English *London Observer*!), deeply embarrassing the administration.

Often a good conversation or lunch meeting or two with an editor, editorial board, or columnist can greatly increase your coverage. Appeal to their sense of muckraking political journalism! Convince them that the issue is important and worth covering. If you read the paper regularly and know what positions they've already taken, it'll help a lot.

When talking to the press, remember a couple of things:

- Be nice to them, even when they screw up, if you want good coverage.
- Don't be too professional, they like students. Be honest and personable.
- Feel free to stop, pause, edit, or rephrase. Relax—you're in control. This is your chance to say whatever you want—if you come up with a particularly good quote, say "Oh, that's a good way of putting it! I'd like it if you used that."
- Tell them what's important. Often you'll groan when you see the article because the emphasized the wrong thing and completely missed the point. Spell it out for them.
- Feel free to ignore a question—don't get put on the defensive. If they don't ask the right question, ask it yourself, and answer it. Besides, a lot of reporters will have next to no idea what's going on, and they're probably racking their brains about what to ask you. Give them break and ask it yourself. Like...

Reporter: So, you want to ban cars from campus. Isn't that going to be pretty inconvenient?

You: Well, I think most people would agree that clean air is worth a little inconvenience. (10 points—great sound bite)

Reporter: I see. And how will this affect the blueberry harvest in August? (Stupid question)

You: Well, I think the real point here is that Flaky City High will be doing its part to fight smog and global warming.

Reporter (impressed): Ah. OK. (Writes it down.)

- Have a Press Table at your event (official group spokespersons could wear armbands) and have press packets on hand to provide background for their article. They'll love you for doing their research for them – and this will mean that they'll have enough information to do a longer article!
- If reporters don't attend your event, write a summary and send it to them anyway. They might have had a time conflict and still want to cover it.
- Finally, you can also do Public Service Announcements (PSAs) for upcoming events on local radio—usually the station will want a 30-second message on a 3x5 card. Local celebrities, bands and so on might want to do the announcement for the publicity.

CHAPTER 8 – Developing an Analysis

*The most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor
is the mind of the oppressed.*
(Steven Biko, 1971)

*The most effective and insidious use of power
is to prevent such conflict from arising in the first place.*
(Steven Lukes, "Power: A Radical View," 1974)

We could end this guide here. With a group, good structure, productive meetings, a strategy, and a couple good campaigns you could do the environment a ton of good. However the dominant ideology tries to assure people that there isn't an environmental crisis. It claims that all the problems are solvable without significant change. We don't agree. We cannot accept the apathy this false idea generates and we need to develop our own ideology to combat it. Whereas mainstream values implicitly support racism, sexism, homophobia, class exploitation and environmental destruction, we call for liberation from all forms of oppression. This section shall raise some questions about the truth of mainstream ideologies in the hope that by critical inquiry we can determine what is really happening, analyze it, convince our friends, construct a long-term plan, and save the Earth before it is too late.

Environmental Justice

We don't have the complexion for protection!
(Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice placard)

Should white people and the upper classes dominate our society? Can a movement that is dominated by those same groups (for instance: the traditional environmental movement), achieve environmental justice and earth liberation? It is all too likely that such a movement will distort its goals to meet those of its participants, discriminating against and shifting the burden of environmental destruction to under-represented groups (notably people of color and the poor).

These questions sparked the creation of the environmental justice movement and the 1991 declaration of environmental justice principles.

Environmental justice is the recognition that the environment does not exist in a vacuum, but that the fate of the earth's inhabitants and the planet are irrevocably linked. In addition, it is quite clear that there are certain groups (notably people of color and the poor) who are disproportionately affected by environmental destruction while receiving much less than their share of the earth's resources.

WE, THE PEOPLE OF COLOR, are gathered together at this First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, to begin to build a national movement of all peoples of color to fight the destruction of our lands and communities, do hereby re-establish our spiritual interdependence to the sacredness of our Mother Earth; we respect and celebrate each of our cultures, languages, and beliefs about the natural world and our roles in healing ourselves; to ensure environmental justice; to promote economic alternatives which would contribute to the development of environmentally safe livelihoods; and to secure our political, economic, and cultural liberation that has been denied for over 500 years of colonialization and oppression, resulting in the poisoning of our communities and land and the genocide of our peoples, do affirm and adopt these Principles of Environmental Justice:

1. Environmental justice affirms the sacredness of Mother Earth, ecological unity and interdependence of all species, and the right to be free from ecological destruction.
2. Environmental justice demands that public policy be based on mutual respect and justice for all peoples, free from any form of discrimination or bias.
3. Environmental justice mandates the right to ethical, balanced and responsible uses of the land and renewable resources in the interest of a sustainable planet for humans and other living things.
4. Environmental justice calls for the universal protection from extraction, production and disposal of toxic/hazardous wastes, and poisons that threaten the fundamental right to clean air, land, water, and food.
5. Environmental justice affirms the fundamental right to political, economic, cultural, and environmental self-determination to all peoples.
6. Environmental justice demands the cessation of the production of all toxins, hazardous wastes, and radioactive substances, and that all past and current producers be held strictly accountable to the people for detoxification and the containment at the point of production.
7. Environmental justice demands the right to participate as equal partners at every level of decision-making including needs assessment, planning, implementation, enforcement, and evaluation.
8. Environmental justice affirms the right of all workers to a safe and healthy work environment, without being forced to choose between those who work at home to be free from environmental hazards.

9. Environmental justice protects the rights of victims of environmental injustice to receive full compensation and reparations for damages as well as quality health care.
 10. Environmental justice considers governmental acts of environmental injustice as a violation of international law, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, and the United Nations Convention on Genocide.
 11. Environmental justice recognizes the special legal relationship of Native Americans to the U.S. government through treaties, agreements, compacts, and covenants affirming their sovereignty and self-determination.
 12. Environmental justice affirms the need for an urban and rural ecology to clean up and rebuild our cities and rural areas in balance with nature, honoring the cultural integrity of all our communities, and providing fair access for all to the full range of resources.
 13. Environmental justice calls for the strict enforcement of principles of informed consent, and a halt to the testing of experimental reproductive and medical procedures and vaccinations on people of color.
 14. Environmental justice opposes the destructive operations of multinational corporations.
 15. Environmental justice opposes military occupation, repression and exploitation of lands, peoples and cultures.
 16. Environmental justice calls for the education of present and future generations which emphasizes social and environmental issues, based on our experience and appreciation of our diverse cultural perspectives.
 17. Environmental justice requires that we, as individuals, make personal and consumer choices to consume as little of Mother Earth's resources and to produce as little waste as possible; and make the conscious decision to challenge and reprioritize our lifestyles to ensure the health of the natural world for present and future generations.
- Adopted, October 27, 1991
(The First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit
Washington, DC)

All forms of oppression, where one individual exerts power over another against that person's interest, are intrinsically connected. The practice of oppression directly prevents the attainment of justice, peace, liberation, and democracy. A holistic view of the environment should show the links between racism, sexism, class exploitation, heterosexism, war, and environmental destruction. If we are to stop environmental destruction, we must have a strong united movement that cannot be divided upon lines of race, sex, class, or sexuality.

There are a series of groups that have been traditionally and still currently oppressed. Power has been exercised over them to maintain an unequal economic and social system, with which a minority obtains the overwhelming majority of the earth's resources.

Did you know that: Americans (figures are similar for Canada) produce 66 times more CO₂ than people from the least developed countries, live twenty-five years longer, and have a 16 times lower rate of infant mortality?

(UNDP 1999 Report)

Class

...people strongly afflicted with the rottenness of our society are best capable of exercising the rot.

(Todd Gitlin, 1964)

There is excellent evidence that the rich are getting richer, while the poor are getting poorer. And these two phenomena are very related. The current U.S. minimum wage, adjusted for inflation, is lower than in 1957. Average weekly earnings were as low in 1998 as they were in 1965. The wage rate for people with less than a high school education has fallen 27% from 1973 to 1998. Meanwhile, the corporate profit rate in 1997 was the highest since 1966. Whereas the average worker's pay fell 3.1% between 1989 and 1997, that of CEO's doubled!

(Figures are from the Economic Policy Institute)

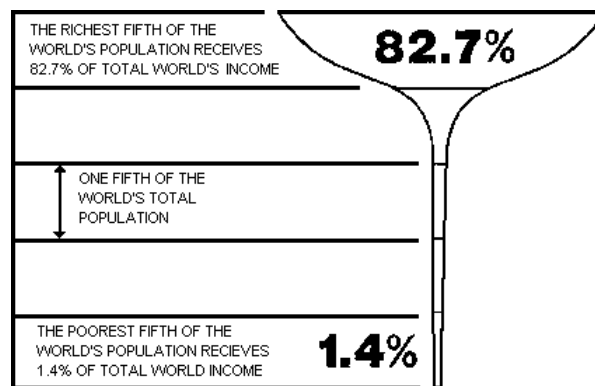
The United States has the widest gap between rich and poor of any industrialized nation. While the American economy is growing (as we destroy our ecosystems), the cream is being skimmed off the top by corporations and the rich. Until recently, the stock market has been increasing 20 to 30% a year because corporate profit is skyrocketing. Corporate profit is skyrocketing because corporations are charging the same high prices while cutting their workers' wages, unsustainably exploiting resources, not paying for the social cost of their pollution, and/or moving production to the Third World. They are using 'free' trade, to maximize their profit by maximizing their exploitation of workers and the environment.

The jobs that are being created are mostly in the service sector and/or part-time. The wages they pay are inadequate and help create the growing sector of 'working

poor' (people who work and yet are poor because their wages are so low).

Not only are the rich doing quite well, but our government has been quite helpful as Clinton and the Republican-controlled Congress got together to pass a 'tax cut' in 1997 that raised taxes for the lowest 20% of income earners, did nothing for the next lowest 20% of Americans, but gave over \$16,000 of cuts to the top 1% of income earners (Citizens for Tax Justice, 1997). Capital gains tax cuts benefit the rich, as the poor do not own stock.

We need to oppose tax cuts for the rich, corporate welfare, increasing CEO salaries, and revitalize the union movement to ensure that workers get their fair share. Within SEAC, class is significant as SEAC leaders come primarily from universities and colleges - places of privilege. In addition, as SEAC relies upon unpaid volunteers to run the network it is difficult for a student who needs to work for money to maintain a paid job, attend school, study, and do activism as well. Likewise it is difficult to travel to attend a protest or conference or to lose a weekend of work, if you are poor.



What is a Caucus?

A caucus is a safe place for people facing different forms of oppression – sexism, racism, or heterosexism – to meet and discuss how this oppression affects them both within and outside of SEAC. SEAC has a Womyn's Caucus, Queer Caucus, Poor Kids (a.k.a. Working Class) Caucus, and People of Color Caucus. SEAC also has alternative groups for men, heterosexuals, whites, and affluent youth so that they can work together with the caucuses to end oppression. Most national and many regional events (conferences, national council meetings) have caucus meetings during which people discuss a particular form of oppression and how to end it. Sometimes a plan of action (like a new campaign) will come from a caucus or alternative group discussion. All caucuses have their own email list and they can also run regular columns in *Threshold*.

For more information read SEAC's Caucus Guide:
www.seac.org/resources/caucuses.pdf

Race

Racism did not end with abolition of slavery or the Civil Rights movement. Both blatant and subtler forms still persist, and adversely affect the lives of millions of people. Far-right organizations like the Ku Klux Klan still hold rallies advocating racist hatred. In a number of European countries racist nationalist parties are strong enough to get seats in their equivalent of the House of Representatives. African-Americans, Latino/as, and Native Americans earn less than whites. The police practice racial profiling, stopping and arresting people because of the color of their skin (ex: the 'horrendous' 'criminal' offense of 'driving while black'). Young African-American men are more likely to go to prison than college. Racial profiling against Arab-Americans is on the rise ever since the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.

On the less blatant side, our high school and university curriculum is full of European culture, philosophy, and history, but only provides cursory coverage to that of people of color. Our universities lack racial diversity in students, faculty, administrators and trustees. Conservative politicians are leading an attack on affirmative action. They would have us deny that the U.S. was founded upon the blood and sweat of slaves, and argue, falsely, that racism should no longer be a concern. Conservatives are also promoting de facto cultural genocide as part of their vision of assimilation, by pushing governments to only use English.

SEAC includes anti-racism in its analysis and has tried to promote racial diversity in the organization with varying levels of success. SEAC's leadership diversified substantially in its early years (from 1989 to 1995). In 1990, at the national Catalyst conference, students formed the People of Color Caucus in response to a lack of diversity and a gap between SEAC's organizational environmental justice rhetoric and its practice. The People of Color Caucus created several programs (like the Environmental Justice Initiative), wrote the Environmental Justice Organizing Guide, and won equal representation for people of color on SEAC's National Council. Unfortunately, since its 1996 crisis, SEAC lost most of its income and also became less diverse. The reasons for our failure include: the lack of racial diversity within the environmental movement; the removal of funding for our Diversity Outreach Coordinator and the People of Color Caucus's Environmental Justice Initiative; the loss of the People of Color Caucus leadership due to the 1996 crisis; our limited number of members to draw upon for leadership; and our lack of a long term plan to achieve diversity. At times people of color in SEAC's leadership have felt tokenized. However, SEAC can, and will, do better.



White Privilege

1. I can—if I wish—arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.
2. If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area which I can afford and in which I would want to live.
3. I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.
4. I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.
5. I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.
6. When I am told about our national heritage or about "civilization," I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.
7. I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.
8. If I want to, I can be pretty sure of finding a publisher for this piece on white privilege.
9. I can go into a music shop and count on finding the music of my race represented, into a supermarket and find the staple foods which fit with my cultural traditions, into a hairdresser's shop and find someone who can cut my hair.
10. Whether I use checks, credit cards, or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability.
11. I can arrange to protect my children most of the time from people who might not like them.
12. I can swear or dress in second hand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty, or the illiteracy of my race.
13. I can speak in public to a powerful male group without putting my race on trial.
14. I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.
15. I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.
16. I can remain oblivious of the language and customs of persons of color who constitute the world's majority without feeling in my culture any penalty for such oblivion.
17. I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as a cultural outsider.
18. I can be pretty sure that if I ask to talk to "the person in charge," I will be facing a person of my race.
19. If a traffic cop pulls me over or if the IRS audits my tax return, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my race.
20. I can easily buy posters, postcards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys, and children's magazines featuring people of my race.
21. I can go home from most meeting of organizations I belong to feeling somewhat tied in, rather than isolated, out-of-place, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance, or feared.
22. I can take a job with an affirmative action employer without having coworkers on the job suspect that I got it because of race.
23. I can choose public accommodation without fearing that people of my race cannot get in or will be mistreated in the places I have chosen.
24. I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help, my race will not work against me.
25. If my day, week, or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it has racial overtones.
26. I can choose blemish cover or bandages in "flesh" color and have them more or less match my skin.

Gender

BECAUSE WOMEN'S WORK IS NEVER DONE AND IS UNDERPAID OR UNPAID OR BORING OR REPTITIOUS AND WE'RE THE FIRST TO GET FIRED AND WHAT WE LOOK LIKE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN WHAT WE DO AND IF WE GET RAPED IT'S OUR FAULT AND IF WE GET BEATEN WE MUST HAVE PROVOKED IT AND IF WE RAISE OUR VOICE WE'RE NAGGING BITCHES AND IF WE ENJOY SEX WE'RE NYMPHOS AND IF WE DON'T WE'RE FRIGID AND IF WE LOVE WOMEN IT'S BECAUSE WE CAN'T GET A "REAL" MAN AND IF WE ASK OUR DOCTORS TOO MANY QUESTIONS WE'RE NEUROTIC AND/OR PUSHY AND IF WE EXPECT CHILDCARE WE'RE SELFISH AND IF WE STAND UP FOR OUR RIGHTS WE'RE AGGRESSIVE AND "UNFEMININE" AND IF WE DON'T WE'RE TYPICAL WEAK FEMALES AND IF WE WANT TO GET MARRIED WE'RE OUT TO TRAP A MAN AND IF WE DON'T WE'RE UNNATURAL AND BECAUSE WE STILL CAN'T GET ADEQUATE SAFE CONTRACEPTIVE BUT MEN CAN WALK ON THE MOON AND IF WE CAN'T COPE OR DON'T WANT A PREGNANCY WE'RE MADE TO FEEL GUILTY ABOUT ABORTION AND... FOR LOTS AND LOTS OF OTHER REASONS WE'RE PART OF THE WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT.
(English National Union of Students Leaflet)

While women are no longer legally the property of men, and have won the vote through the suffragist movement, they are still oppressed. Both men and women are constrained by gender stereotypes. While men are raised to be hard, rational, and strong, women are portrayed as soft, emotional, irrational, and weak. Despite the gains of women's liberation movement, women are still defined externally, by men. This is clear from the prevalence of eating disorders among women, a result of social pressure to be thin. Male-dominated society objectifies women. Men abuse, dominate and rape women. Women earn less than men for equal work. Women do not get paid for housework, which is unequally shared, if shared at all, with their spouses. Men fill most positions of leadership, whereas women fill the lower ranks. Our sexist society would have women subject their desires and goals to those of men and find their fulfillment in bringing up children, housework and serving their spouse. While much of this is changing, the change is too slow.

Within SEAC, women have historically taken a strong leadership role; however, while women are active as leaders they are still a greater percent of female SEAC members than leaders. The Womyn's Caucus has promoted the role of women, held retreats, organized campaigns, and criticized SEAC at times for internal organizational sexism (men ignoring, interrupting women, lack of women leaders and speakers, etc).



PRIVILEGE

A poem for men who don't understand what we mean when we say they have it.

privilege is simple:

going for a pleasant stroll after dark,
not checking the back of your car as you get in, sleeping soundly,
speaking without interruption, and not remembering
dreams of rape, that follow you all day, that woke you crying, and
privilege

is not seeing your stripped, humiliated body
plastered in celebration across every magazine rack, privilege
is going to the movies and not seeing yourself
terrorized, defamed, battered, butchered

privilege is

riding your bicycle across town without being screamed at or
run off the road, not needing an abortion, taking off your shirt
on a hot day in a crowd, not wishing you could type better
just in case, not shaving your legs, having a decent job and expecting to keep
it not

feeling the boss's hand up your crotch
dozing off on late-night buses, privilege
is being the hero in the TV show not the dumb broad,
living where your genitals are totemized not denied,
knowing your doctor won't rape you

privilege is being

smiled at all day by nice helpful women, it is
the way you pass judgement on their appearance with magisterial authority,
the way you face a judge of your own sex in court and
are overrepresented in Congress and are not strip searched for a traffic ticket
or used as a dart board by your friendly mechanic, privilege
is seeing your bearded face reflected through the history texts
not only of your high school days but all your life, not being
relegated to a paragraph
every other chapter, the way you occupy
entire volumes of poetry and more than your share of the couch unchallenged,
it is your mouthing smug, atrocious insults at women
who blink and change the subject-politely-privilege
is how seldom the rapist's name appears in the papers
and the way you smirk over your PLAYBOY

it's simply really, privilege

means someone else's pain, your wealth

is my terror, your uniform

is a woman raped to death here or in Cambodia or wherever

wherever your obscene privilege

writes your name is my blood, it's that simple

you've always had it, that's why it doesn't

seem to make you sick at stomach,

you have it, we pay for it, now

do you understand

(D.A. Clarke, *Banshee*, 1981)

Sexuality

Queers are sometimes considered the invisible minority. While you can identify the women in your group and the people of color, you cannot readily identify the queers in the group by sight. We never ask for orientation on a questionnaire, presumably either because we don't want to know or we're afraid of the answer. You could argue that none of these questions should be asked, but that is another debate. Don't assume you can peg people by appearance or mannerism. By making judgements based on these observations, you are reacting only to stereotypes. It does happen that a straight person is mistaken for gay and that is as unfair to that person as assuming a gay is straight.

Being an invisible minority can serve as both help and hindrance. Being invisible means that you don't have to face these issues every time you speak to someone. You can pick and choose how and whether you address the topic of sexual orientation. For many queers, this ability to 'pass' as straight may seem like a good thing. Their sexual orientation can remain a non-issue, never coming up and therefore protecting them from the threat of harassment.

But it's inherently destructive, since in order to do this a basic part of that person's life must remain, as the phrase goes, closeted. The negative side of being invisible is that it is easy to remain that way, easy to continue to suppress part of your life. After careful closeting, coming out can be traumatic for everyone. Queers feel vulnerable, afraid of rejection or abuse at the hands of their peers. Straights feel betrayed, shocked that their friends and allies didn't trust them enough to tell the truth about themselves. And as if the interpersonal problems weren't nightmare enough, this can sometimes turn into an intense group psychodrama of mythic proportions. As relationships shut down, the organization can start to suffer because of lack of good communication, loss of focus on the work at hand, and general fragmentation. Imagine talking to a good friend and fellow activist about a heterosexual relationship you're involved in. You have spent many a weekend protesting Home Depot together. You *think* the two of you are close. Then you discover she's gay. Even though you never thought to ask, the fact that this important thing was never said can seem a betrayal, regardless of how you feel or what you think about homosexuality.

Being invisible leads to a culture of silence, since many falsely believe that silence is the safest and easiest way to be gay in today's world. But we are not a movement built on silence, the status quo, the easy way out, or playing it safe. We're here to challenge assumptions and change the world, and to be fully engaged and ourselves in the process. So as long as there are people in our movement who are afraid to come out, afraid to challenge their prejudices, and afraid to tell the truth and be who they are, our work isn't done.

The obvious place to start building an open and collaborative group is by creating a discrimination-free organizing zone that invites full participation from all members

of the group. This is not easy, even in theory. After all, if the goal is inclusiveness, then you've got to find a way to bring *everybody* in. This means nipping heterosexism and homophobia in the bud, making the group explicitly aware of its diversity, and being willing to talk about these issues openly and fairly. (That's the obvious part of the job!) But it also means not forcing the issue on queers who aren't out yet, and being conscientious about not outing members.

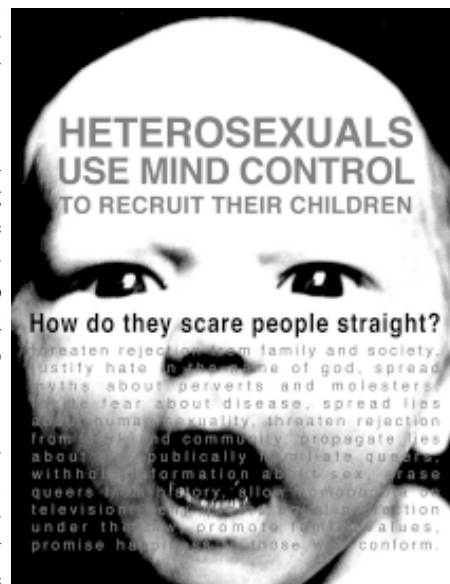
SEAC's Queer Caucus is a safe space for women and men who are queer or questioning, to discuss their sexuality, related issues, and find support.

Being inclusive means accepting all people, even those not perfectly recovered from every single one of their prejudices. It means finding a way to include even those people who are still struggling with their prejudices and not excluding them. And – the hardest part for the progressive movement that we are — it means getting creative about how to help members, straight and queer, deal honestly with their homophobia and heterosexism without sidelining them or kicking them out of the organization. Let's face it: this movement needs everyone it can get, so it's better to educate than turn your back. Plus, we're building an *inclusive* progressive movement, not creating a new class of outcasts, right?

In an ideal world, we could all sit down with our organizations at the beginning of each year, agree on some type of code of conduct, and personally monitor ourselves. But we've all been through too many botched meetings and strained rap sessions to think that's going to happen, so where do you start?

You start by making a formal, organizational commitment to nondiscrimination. Maybe your campus or student government or group already has a policy in place forbidding discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender

identity (remember that the queer umbrella includes the transgendered and transexual folks too). Mention this in early meetings. If there's not one in place already, that could be a good project, either independently or in coalition with the campus women's or queer groups. Regardless, it's a good idea to include a nondiscrimination statement in your group's student government charter or bylaws. That way, you have an enforceable policy that'll let you rest easy this year and ten years down the road, when the group's in unknown hands and you're long gone and



working with the Peace Corps in Mali.

Those bylaws and policies, and whatever materials your group churns out, should be written with an eye towards inclusive language. Inclusive language is an amazing tool for people speaking in meetings or presentations, too. Those French philosophers your profs are always droning on about in lectures were right about one thing, if nothing else: language *does* affect your perception of reality. If your group doesn't happen to have out-and-proud-of-it queers in the membership, it can be easy to forget that such folks exist unless they/we are specifically mentioned. (Note that that sentence includes a good example of what I'm talking about: you can't *assume* that queers are a "they," even if you can't think of any in your group off the top of your head.) If a queer student shows up and feels talked *around* and avoided, you can bet that s/he is lots less likely to come back for the second meeting or volunteer to table next week. Plus, watching language on sexual orientation/gender identity will also help weed out gender equity issues, thereby killing two discriminatory birds with one linguistic stone.

Most importantly, there should be some type of action plan that takes your organizational commitment to equality off the printed page and into the real world. For starters, it's not a bad idea to set up a system for dealing with problems with individual members who're having problems treating others with respect. If you don't have a plan before the crisis, your perspective during the crisis will stink. Everyone will react on gut instinct, everyone will take it personally, and in the end, the group will suffer. One idea is to appoint an ombudsman who can remain an objective third party — maybe your staff advisor, another faculty or staff ally, or a student outside the group whom everyone can trust — and help keep individual problems from tearing apart the entire group.

Most groups do (or ought to do!) check-in meetings once a semester or so to talk about upcoming and current projects, group dynamics, and other issues that affect the effectiveness of the organization. This should include some group discussion and evaluation of how well people are — or aren't — dealing with discrimination, including discrimination against queers. You don't need to have a pity party or shame-n-blame session about it. Just check in to be sure that the group is being truly inclusive, doing outreach to queer students, enforcing its nondiscrimination policies, etc. Develop action plans for areas of weakness: find a project to work on in coalition with the campus queer group, invite that group to an upcoming function, appoint a liaison between your organizations... whatever it takes. Then do it.

Being Radical

You ain't done nothing if you ain't been called a red.
(Bill Haywood)

*All truth goes through three stages. First it is ridiculed.
Then it is violently opposed. Finally, it is accepted as self-evident.*
(Schopenhauer)

If you dare to have the audacity to challenge the isms and fight for environmental justice then you just might want to admit you're a radical. Being 'radical' actually makes a ton of sense, as the word's definition means one who goes to the roots. A radical would ask questions like 'what is at the root of environmental destruction?' 'Is it our economic structure that requires ever-expanding production (and thus resource exploitation) and puts profits before people?' 'Is there a fundamental cultural problem when people are defined by their consumption?' The tougher the questions you ask, the more you doubt what the government, corporations, and other elites say, and start listening to the poor and oppressed of the world – the more 'radical' you'll become.

Most activists are caught up in a radicalizing circle, called 'praxis,' in which action and theory are intrinsically linked. First one learns a little about an injustice, then one gets involved fighting it, then one learns more (either through being active or out of the necessity of winning the campaign), and so on until one becomes a dedicated activist. As you attend conferences and training sessions, talk to friends, and read, you become more aware and move on to new issues. Everybody has to start somewhere. Some of the most radical activists and experienced SEACers started with the simple desire to save the forest or this planet before it is too late. One SEACer almost joined the Young Republicans instead (but didn't) and after a couple years in SEAC was writing a Forest Service Appeal (using the legal system to stop logging a forest). You might be working on improving your recycling program now, but you might be challenging a large multi-national (how about Monsanto?) a year from now, taking it to the streets!

SEACers hold a wide range of political views. While our members tend to be more radical than those of the other student environmental organizations are, we also have our share of people who are just starting out.

There's a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart, that you can't take part; you can't even tacitly take part. And you've got to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels, upon all the apparatus and you've got to make it stop. And you've got to indicate to the people who run it, to the people who own it, that unless you're free, the machine will be prevented from working at all.

(Mario Savio, "The End of History," 1964)

So why do activists become more radical? Perhaps it is that as people start reading alternative media, books, email, webpages, and magazines, attending conferences and talking to their friends, they break through the propaganda of the corporate owned media and start to realize a chunk of the truth. The media fails to cover human rights abuses and activists challenging injustice and dulls our minds so we become apathetic individuals. If television and newspapers were 'good for us,' they would show us how by working with other people who share our interests, we can achieve common progressive social goals. But is it surprising that when most media is owned by corporations and run for a profit and relies upon serving the interests of its corporate advertisers, that it would choose to emphasize items that fit its slant, excluding the opinions of those working for social change?

The media is always interviewing the same government spokespersons, either Democrats or Republicans (both of whom only get elected thanks to multi-million dollar campaign war chests raised from rich and corporate donors), same economists, same corporate leaders, and rarely ever environmentalists, human rights activists, pacifists, feminists, etc. According to a 1990 study by Fairness and Accuracy In Reporting (FAIR), 90% of PBS's MacNeil / Lehrer's US guests were white, 87% male, 46% current or former governmental officials, 38% professional, and 5% corporate representatives. On 17 of their shows where environmental issues were covered, only one representative of an environmental group appeared. When government and corporate leaders are given round the clock coverage, it is hard for an activist to counter their arguments (and the overwhelming bulk of ideology that is handed down by our institutions in their favor) in the ten or thirty seconds that they are given on rare occasions. It is not surprising given the disparity in time that activists get compared to our targets, that society is often neutralized (a.k.a. apathetic) or even in opposition to our campaigns. It is a testimony to the righteousness of our causes, that, despite the media's slant against us, we often still have a majority on our side. The solution is to break through the information barrier, letting people know the facts and then mobilizing them for success.



The business of the journalists is to destroy the truth, to lie outright, to pervert, to vilify, to fawn at the feet of mammon, and to sell his country and his race for his daily bread. You know it and I know it, and what folly is this toasting an independent press? We are the tools and vassals of rich men behind the scenes. We are the jumping jacks, they pull the strings and we dance. Our talents, our possibilities and our lives are all the property of other men.

We are intellectual prostitutes.

(John Swinton, the Chief of Staff for the New York Times, 1953)

In society 'radical' can often take a negative connotation.

So is it radical to...

- ✧ Reduce CO₂ emissions to a sustainable level and stop global warming by converting the economy to alternative sources of energy like wind and solar?
- ✧ Fight cancer by stopping the production and release of toxins that cause it?
- ✧ Abolish nuclear weapons that could destroy the entire planet?
- ✧ Protect the 5% of original forests that are left in the U.S to stop species extinction and reduce global warming?
- ✧ Make our economy environmentally sustainable, instead of using up our planet and hoping that we'll miraculously find another one?
- ✧ Want clean air to breathe, fresh water to drink and a safe environment in which to live?
- ✧ Place the planet and its people before corporate profit?
- ✧ Build a world free of sexism, racism, heterosexism, and class inequality?



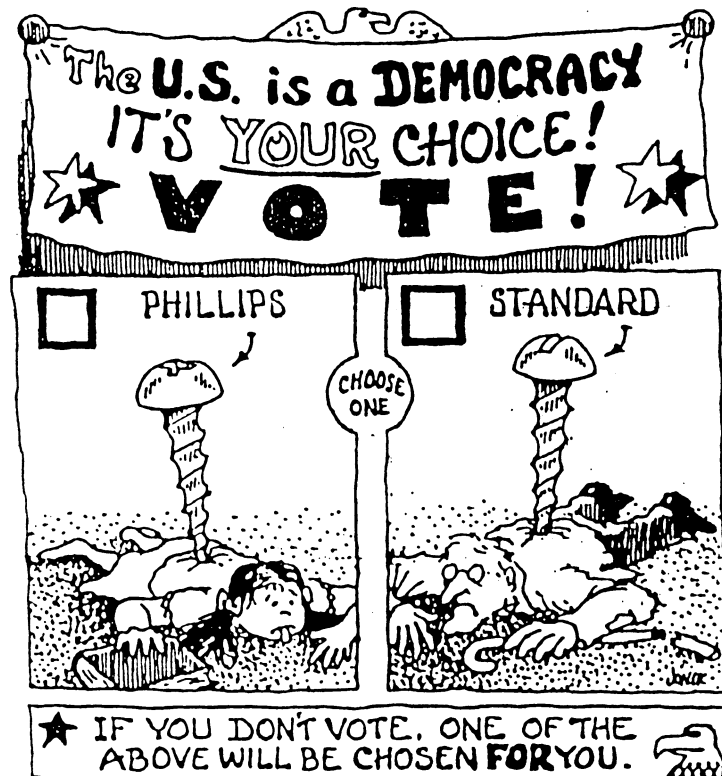
Did you know that the assets of the world's top three billionaires are larger than the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of all Least Developed Countries and their 600 million people?

(UNDP, 1999 report)

Like the media, our school system is also guilty of teaching us how to fit in to the system and support the status quo by getting a job – instead of preparing us to tackle the problems that will decide our society's future fate (such as environmental destruction, war, hunger, poverty, racism, etc). Next we shall examine the role of our schools, our position as students, and how this affects our organizing and our lives.

*The most serious threat to democracy
is the notion that it has already been achieved.*

(Author unknown)



Student Liberation

*We refuse to buy the right not to die of hunger
by running the risk of dying of boredom.*
(Student Slogan, Paris, 1968)

Fact: College graduates earn 47% more than high school ones.
(Economic Policy Institute, 1997/1998)

Students are oppressed by an education system that reproduces inequality and dictatorial administrations that suppress critical dissent. While the oppression of students is not nearly as severe as that suffered by other people in the world, it is essential for students to question the way in which we are being educated both for the value of our education and so that we can develop a liberated space which we can use to promote environmental justice.

The education system places students in hierarchical relationships to their teachers who hold the ultimate power over them by awarding grades that determine whether a student will join the social elite or the working masses. Grades are often meaningless, as one's ability to memorize or answer multiple choice questions can have very little to do with one's intelligence. A smart person would not waste their time learning useless information and find ways to avoid it. From early age grades, exams, bells, mindless repetitive work, and arbitrary rules condition students to follow, and ultimately internalize and accept, authority. Due to this conditioning, former students will often prefer their jobs over the time they were students, and fail to recognize the injustices in the boss to worker relationship at their workplace or question the impact of their corporate employer's actions on society. Also the curriculum is limited to the set of ideas that are acceptable to the ruling elite. Students do not learn successful tactics for challenging the institutionalized sexism, racism, heterosexism and the oppression of the poor. By not challenging this system, students are failing in their process of education and enabling the perpetuation of injustice on a larger scale.

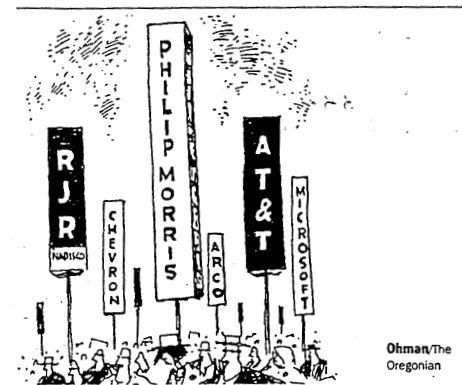
Most school administrations work to ensure that the will of a very small number of administrators and rich donors prevails over that of a much larger number of students and faculty. Often administrations will cater to the values of rich donors so that they can maximize their revenue and thus maintain their elite status. They care more for their US News and World Report ranking than about the quality of their teaching. Rich donors (some of which will give several million or tens of millions of dollars) and alumni are often very conservative and their support requires the suppression of the more liberal desires of the students. Thus it is quite rational for administrations to suppress free speech and raise barriers to student activism to prevent challenges to its control. This is easiest at private schools where students don't have legal rights. Historically administrations have tried to replace the legal role of parents; ('in locus parentis' — Latin for the university taking on the role of

the university taking on the role of your 'local parents') however due to Sixties activism students have made large gains.

The 'futures' and 'careers' for which American students now prepare are for the most part intellectual and moral wastelands. This chrome-plated consumers' paradise would have us grow up to be well-behaved children. But an important minority of men and women coming to the front today have shown that they will die rather than be standardized, replaceable and irrelevant.

(Mario Savio, 1964)

Students may be oppressed, but we are also at a unique transitory period in our lives when we are more open to new ideas and the possibility of working for environmental justice than at any other time. Students need to work to change their conditions and build a truly just society, starting with where they spend much of their day, in school. If your school has rules that discourage rallies or other forms of free speech, perhaps it is time to challenge and change them. Classes can be empowering. You can gather a group of students, locate a faculty member, and try to get a department to add a new course (ex.: environmental justice, environmental racism, deep ecology, student movement history, nonviolent social change, etc).



Some schools will let students teach classes: ask! Also, you could either do an independent study project by yourself, or with a group. By doing so, you could get credit for organizing a SEAC conference, writing / revising an organizing guide, developing materials (fact sheets, a webpage, campaign related, etc.), developing a regional network, working on a campaign, writing / editing / doing layout for Threshold, etc. All of these activities are very educational and remember that you deserve

to get credit for the hard activist work you are doing! The most effective system of education combines action (activism) and reflection (study / reading).

In an ideal future, students will be liberated. Universities, colleges, and high schools will discuss the important environmental and social problems of our time and research the solutions. Racism, sexism, heterosexism, oppression of the poor and environmental destruction will all be eliminated from campus. Students will be pushing the rest of society to follow our lead as we work to achieve environmental justice.

CHAPTER 9 – Building SEAC

Now you might be thinking that it's about time that this organizing guide grind to a halt. But what about SEAC? You hopefully didn't forget, because there's an entire movement that needs your support!

Ahh, so how can you help SEAC? First you must realize that you are SEAC. There is no one behind the curtain. SEAC is run by volunteer youth. If our members do not take an active part in our organization, then things fall through.

Fortunately there are many ways and levels at which you can be involved in SEAC. First have your group pay dues to SEAC and also get members to individually join. We rely upon memberships to pay our minimal expenses (rent, phone, printing, mailing, travel scholarships, etc). Far too often, students will spend money on attending a concert, buying a CD, beer or eating out and not pay a meager \$25 to support SEAC's work for environmental justice.



Also, you can help SEAC by making sure that your regional, state and area coordinators and the SEAC national office has the most recent contact information for your group and its active members. Please send a person's name, mailing address, email, phone number and expected graduation date and include their summer information. You can use the web form at <http://www.seac.org/involved/join.shtml> to do this. Share your successes (and failures) on your regional email list. You can write articles, opinions, letters, poetry, jokes, and send pictures and illustrations to *Threshold*. If you develop a cool fact sheet, pamphlet, or info-packet then send a copy to the national office so that we can give other groups a copy. Maybe you have some information that should go on our webpage. You can work with other schools in your area, state, or region and together launch a powerful campaign (get a copy of SEAC's coordinating guide)! If your area doesn't have a coordinator, maybe you'd like to volunteer for that (it's extremely important). You can also get involved with SEAC at the national level, representing your group on the National Council and/or serving on a committee and helping SEAC plan and realize its future. There are always exciting projects that need people, so if you just volunteer yourself there will be plenty to do. SEAC thrives when our members take initiative.

For an extensive list of ways to get more involved in SEAC visit:
www.seac.org/involved/

CHAPTER 10 – SEACing the Passion of Greenfire

*Comrades, 5 hours of sleep a day is indispensable:
we need you for the revolution.
(May 1968 graffiti)*

So you're an activist, right? Have you ever stopped to consider why that is? Or what that means? What is it that you are activating for? This guide is meant to provide you with a toolbox. This toolbox is filled with tools to use as an effective activist on behalf of the Earth, Justice and Equality. Each tool in this toolbox has a specific use; it is important to choose the right tool for the job. But it is also important to remember that you need to be healthy to use these tools; you can't swing a hammer with a broken arm. Likewise, you can't be an effective activist over the long run without balance. This section focuses on finding balance within the movement.

Our movement, if we are to be successful, has to be made up of more than people who know how to use tools; it has to be made up of people who are balanced enough to use them effectively time and time again. Our movement has to be made up of people who burn with the inner passion of greenfire. As environmentalists, we are all aware of the delicate balance that exists in nature; much of our work seeks to restore balance to the earth where we humans have tipped the scales. As a movement and individuals in the movement, we must find a balance between our activism, the heat and light of our greenfires, and the fuel that sustains our greenfires.

In today's world, there are many examples of our apparent inability to connect with other people. Strangers have trouble meeting one another's gaze, let alone smiling at one another. In a world where we can't treat one another with compassion, how can we expect to treat other species, or the earth herself, with compassion?

It is important that we rekindle our passion with every waking moment, with every breath. It is too easy to forget our connection to the earth, to life. This is the thing that we most tend to neglect because it deals with searching the inner realms of ourselves in an effort to discover what it is that keeps us going, that fuels our greenfire. Self-searching is never an easy task, but without it, we cannot be balanced, and without balance we suffer. When we take the time to reconnect with ourselves, with the passion that is our greenfire, then are we balanced and then we are more effective and productive, more happy and content. Only with inner balance can we achieve the drastic change we so seek and the earth so needs.

How can we restore balance to our lives? The first step is to acknowledge our need for balance and to begin the journey of discovery and exploration. Part of this journey must be carried out alone, searching your inner depths, what some might call your soul. Part of the journey can and should be shared with friends and family. It is important to realize that the journey has no end point; as the saying goes: 'the path is the goal.'

Being an activist is more than using tools. Being an activist is about being balanced internally and with our surroundings. Part of that balance is developing, focusing, and feeding the inner greenfire that burns in us all. We need to spend time searching our souls and sharing what we find. We need to spend time searching the collective ‘soul’ of our movement, even if it takes time away from our important work. If we don’t, we may suffer the same fate that we are trying to avert in this age of ecological crisis: overexploitation of our resources will lead to our collapse. Organizations and groups come and go, swept away by the torrents of time and raging wind of opposition that too often snuffs out some of our fire, takes away some of our activists. In order to combat this, we need to build a strong foundation of community, passion and greenfire, rooted in the interbeing of all things. From this foundation, we can sustain ourselves and our movement. It is important that we understand the origins of our passion, the source of our greenfire. It is important that we share this understanding with each other, for your source of passion is inevitably different from mine; only through sharing, can we begin to more deeply understand one another’s motivation and actions and strive to work in harmony together.

If I cannot dance, I don't want to be part of your revolution.
(Emma Goldman)

I offer you this challenge:

Whenever you can, go into the wild. Commune with nature, whether it is for a few hours, a day, or a week. Breathe deeply. Listen intently. Let the wildness infuse you. Renew you. Sustain you. Go by yourself. Take some friends. Share your stories with them around a campfire, under the starry sky. Listen intently to their stories. Be open. Understanding will come. Strength will grow. Energy will multiply.



Whenever you can, go forth and interact with people. Spread joy. Greet strangers you pass on the street. Smile often. Listen deeply when people speak. Start random conversations. Or join ones already in progress. Meet new people. Those people that you love, tell them. Give praise for a job well done. Thank people for being who they are. Offer sincere compliments to those people that you have difficulty with. Help people whenever possible. Be open. Treat people with loving kindness. Love and joy will grow. Your world will get bigger and yet infinitely more intimate. The impossible will become possible.

So what has this given you? Is it a recipe for balance? No, it is a hint of possibilities. It is glimpse of something beautiful. It is a piece of the puzzle; it is up to you to finish putting it together as you see it. I hope this has given you a framework from which to begin sourcing your flame, your greenfire, and keeping it alive.

Conclusion

El pueblo, unido, jamás será vencido!
(The people, united, will never be defeated.)

*My aim is to agitate and disturb people.
I'm not selling bread, I'm selling yeast.*
(Miguel de Unamuno)

Fourteen years ago, a wave of student environmental groups swept universities, colleges, and high schools across North America. They started recycling programs, communed with nature, protected forests, demanded corporate accountability, challenged globalization, educated their peers and won campaigns. They had corporations, politicians, administrators, and rich people running scared. They were SEACers.

And yet, they didn't even have organizing guides. Fourteen years later another generation of student environmentalists is organizing on campuses, communities, statewide, regionally, nationally and internationally. But this time we've got a manual! If you read this book and the resources listed at the end, keep on learning and keep on acting then you'll be better prepared than most student activists in the past thirty years. You'll win more and have a heck of a lot more fun.

As students have won victories, the student movement (which goes way beyond environmentalism) has developed. While it has not yet seized society's attention, the potential is incredible. One of SEAC's logical predecessors, Students for a Democratic Society, went from couple hundred members in 1962, to a hundred thousand in 1968. SEAC could have that many members, receive daily news coverage, organize thousands of students to shut polluters down, pressure politicians and most importantly turn society around from environmental destruction to save this planet for the seven generations to follow us.

Coming soon, to a planet near you, *a student movement*. The students are uniting. We're chanting, singing, playing, yelling, writing, blocking bulldozers, leafleting, liberating animals, sitting-in, gathering, building, dancing from coast to coast — and we'll never be defeated.

As anti-nuke activist Dr. Helen Caldicott declared at SEAC's 1990 Catalyst conference:

**This is the beginning of the revolution
that is going to save the earth.**

Appendix: Useful Resources

For additional resources, including online factsheets, Threshold, contacts, and more - visit the website.

SEAC
PO Box 31909
Philadelphia, PA 19104
Tel: 215-222-4711
www.seac.org
Email: seac@seac.org

Physical Address: 4515 Baltimore Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19143. On the second floor. We love visitors!

Alternative Media

- Anarchist News Service: www.ainfos.ca
- A-Infos Radio Project: www.radio4all.net (programming source)
- Environmental News Network: www.enn.com
- Fairness and Accuracy In Reporting: www.fair.org (media watchdog and critic)
- www.fair.org/reports/macneil-study.html (FAIR's 1990 study on the bias in PBS)
- Indymedia: www.indymedia.org (alternative newswire - one of the best sites on the Internet)
- MicroRadio.net: grassroots lowpower radio network.
- Pacifica Radio: www.pacifica.org (Excellent source of progressive news — using real audio, which is available for free from www.realaudio.com)
- Rachel's Environmental & Health Weekly: www.rachel.org (indepth environmental reporting)

Animal Rights, Vegetarianism, Veganism, Factory Farms

- Animal Concerns: www.animalconcerns.org/
- Factory Farms: www.sierraclub.org/cafos/
- McSpotlight: www.mcspotlight.org/ (Anti-McDonalds group)
- People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals: www.peta-online.org/ info@peta-online.org, 501 Front St., Norfolk, VA 23510; 757-622-PETA
- SEA Shepherd Society: (www.seashepherd.org) 22774 Pacific Coast Hwy, Malibu, CA 90265. 310-456-1141
- Vegan Action: www.vegan.org, PO BOX 4288, Richmond, VA 23220. 804-254-8346.
- Vegan Outreach: www.veganoutreach.org. Produces awesome "Why Vegan?" pamphlet, online at www.veganoutreach.org/wv/
- Vegetarian Resource Group: www.vrg.org, PO Box 1463, Baltimore, MD 21203. (410) 366-8343 Email: vrg@vrg.org

Books Misc.

- *50 Years is Enough: the Case Against the World Bank and the IMF.* Kevin Danaher, ed.
- *In the Absence of the Sacred: The Failure of Technology and the Survival of the Indian Nations.* Jerry Mander.
- *The Activist's Handbook.* Randy Shaw.
- *Adventures in Medialand: Behind the News, Beyond the Pundits.* Jeff Cohen and Norman Solomon.
- *Animal Liberation.* Peter Singer.
- *Beyond Beef.* Jeremy Rifkin.
- *Black Man's Burden.* Basil Davidson.
- *Burning All Illusions: A Guide to Radical Freedom.* David Edwards.
- *Campus, Inc: Corporate Power in the Ivory Tower.* Geoffrey D. White and Flannery A.
- *Campus Ecology.* April Smith and SEAC. (Guide to doing an environmental audit of your campus)
- *Chemical Deceptors: The Toxic Threat to Health and the Environment.* Marc Lappe.
- *Civil Disobedience.* Henry David Thoreau.
- *Confessions of an EcoWarrior.* Dave Foreman.
- *Confronting Environmental Racism: Voices from the Grassroots.* Robert D. Bullard, ed.
- *Corporations are Gonna Get Your Momma.* Kevin Danaher, ed. (Globalization, corporate power)
- *Deep Ecology.* Bill Devall.
- *Diet for a New America.* John Robbins. (Advocates veganism)
- *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality.* Robert Bullard, ed.
- *Dying from Dioxin: A Citizen's Guide to Reclaiming Our Health and Rebuilding Democracy.* Lois Marie Gibbs.
- *Earth For Sale.* Brian Tokar. (Distinguishes radical environmentalism from the mainstream.)

- *Earth in Mind*. David Orr.
- *Education for Building a People's Movement*. David Reed.
- *Feminist Theory from Margin to Center*. bell hooks.
- *The Freighthopper's Manual for North America : Hoboing in the 21st Century*. Daniel Leen
- *Fundraising for Social Change*. Kim Klein.
- *Generation React: Activism for Beginners*. David Seo.
- *Hitchhiking in America : Using the Golden Thumb*. Dale Carpenter.
- *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse*. Peter Matthiessen.
- *Killing Rage: Ending Racism*. bell hooks.
- *Leasing the Ivory Tower: The Corporate Takeover of Academia*. Lawrence C. Solely.
- *Letter from Burma*. Aung San Suu Kyi.
- *Listen Up: Voices from the Next Feminist Generation*. Barbara Findlen, ed.
- *Manufacturing Consent*. Noam Chomsky. (Critique of the corporate media)
- *The Marx-Engels Reader*. Robert Tucker, ed.
- *Monkey Wrench Gang*. Edward Abbey. (Novel that inspired Earth First!)
- *Nuclear Madness*. Helen Caldicott.
- *Organizing for Social Change: A Manual for Activists in the 1990's*. Kim Bobo.
- *People's History of the United States*. Howard Zinn. (A radical history)
- *Queerly Classified*. Susan Raffo, ed.
- *Rebellion from the Roots : Indian Uprising in Chiapas*. John Ross.
- *Red Earth, White Lies*. Vines Deloria.
- *Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals*. Saul Alinsky.
- *Thinking Class: Sketches from a Cultural Worker*. Janna Kadi.
- *Sand County Almanac*. Aldo Leopold.
- *The Sexual Politics of Meat*. Carol Adams.
- *Silent Spring*. Rachel Carson.
- *Sister Outsider*. Audre Lorde.
- *Skin: Talking about Sex, Class, and Literature*. Dorothy Allison.
- *Steal This Book*. Abbie Hoffman. Online: www.vintagevinyl.com/steal/steal.html (Activist survival guide)
- *Thinking Forward*. Michael Albert. (Explains participatory economics – an intriguing alternative to capitalism)
- *Toxic Sludge is Good for You: Lies, Damned Lies and the Public Relations Industry*. John Stauber.
- *Uncovering the Right on Campus*. Center for Campus Organizing.
- *Unequal Protection: Environmental Justice and Communities of Color*. Robert D. Bullard, ed.
- *Unorthodox Marxism*. Michael Albert. (Radical theory)
- *Vegan: The New Ethics of Eating*. Erik Marcus.

- *Vice Versa: Bisexuality and the Eroticism of Everyday Life*. Marjorie B. Garber.
- *Walden*. Henry David Thoreau.
- *War Against the Greens*. David Helvarg. (Greenwashing and other attacks on the environmental movement)
- *What Uncle Sam Really Wants*. Noam Chomsky.
- *When Corporations Rule the World*. David Korten.
- *When Elephants Weep: the Emotional Lives of Animals*. Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson and Susan McCarthy.
- *Who Will Tell the People*. William Greider.

Burma

- The Free Burma Coalition: 1101 Pennsylvania Ave., SE #204 Washington, DC 20003, Tel: 202-547-5985. info@freeburmacoalition.org
- The Free Burma Coalition Manual, Linda Kwon, 1997. Available from the Free Burma Coalition.

Congress Info

- Website to look up who your congressional and senatorial representatives are (and include the typical address for them): www.vote-smart.org/ (use your zip +4)

Sample mailing addresses:

- Hon. Dennis Hastert, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515
- Hon. Thomas Daschle, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510
- President George Bush, The White House, Washington, DC 20500, 202-456-1111
- Capitol switchboard (for your congress person), (202) 224-3121
- For your two senators call (202) 225-3121

Culture Jamming

- www.adbusters.org (progressive magazine with slick graphics)
- www.abrupt.org (another culture jamming page – good inspiration if you want to break out of that bland postering mold)
- www.billboardliberation.com/home.html (has a guide to doing it)
- <http://kersplebedeb.com/mystuff/gallintr.html> (radical images)

Dioxins

- Achieving Zero Dioxin report: www.greenpeace.org/~toxics/reports/azd/azd.html

- Center For Health, Environment and Justice: www.chej.org, P.O. Box 6806, Falls Church, VA 22040 703-237-2249
- www.enviroweb.org/issues/dioxin/

Economic Justice

- Citizens for Tax Justice: www.ctj.org, 202-626-3780. (Shows how tax cuts, the flat tax, and capital gains cuts benefit the rich)
- Economic Policy Institute: <http://epinet.org>, 202-775-8810. (Economic inequality)
- United for a Fair Economy: www.stw.org, 617-423-2148 (Income inequality)
- seac-class@seac.org (Email list of the SEAC Working Class or Poor Kids Caucus)

Environmental Justice

- www.ejnet.org/ej/
- EJ Fund - www.ejfund.org/
- EJ Resource Center - www.ejrc.cau.edu/

Feminism

- Feminist Majority: www.feminist.org, 1600 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 801, Arlington, VA 22209, 703-522-2214, femmaj@feminist.org
- National Organization for Women: www.now.org, 733 15th St NW, 2nd floor, Washington DC 20005. 202-628-8669
- SEAC Womyn's caucus email list: seac-womyn@seac.org

Forest Activism

- Heartwood: www.heartwood.org, PO Box 1424, Bloomington, IN 47402, 812-337-8898, inform@heartwood.org (Forest issues in the Mid-West, South-East, and East of the US)
- End logging on public lands www.sierraclub.org/logging/

Free Radio — shut out of the corporate controlled media? Create your own!

- How-To Start: www.radio4all.org/how-to.html
- Free Radio Network www.frn.net (Strongly oriented towards pirate shortwave radio)
- LD Brewer: www.ldbrewer.com (Source of kits, notably the digital PLL ones)
- Ramsey Electronics: www.ramseyelectronics.com (maker of the cheap analog FM 10a transmitter and others)
- "Seizing the Airwaves: A Free Radio Handbook." Stephen Dunifer & Ron Sakolsky, eds. \$12.95 + \$3 S/H from Free Radio Berkeley: 1442A Walnut Street, Berkeley, California 94709. 510-595-4605, xmtrman@pacbell.net. www.freeradio.org

Genetic Engineering

- A SEED's Ground Up Campaign www.groundup.org/
- Genetic Engineering Action Network -- <http://www.geaction.org/>
- Organic Consumers Association <http://organicconsumers.org/> 218-226-4164, (really good).
- Genetic Resources Action International: www.grain.org/

Globalization

- www.globalizethis.org
- www.abolishthebank.org

Greening the Campus

- Campus Ecology (The Program): www.nwf.org/campusecology, campus@nwf.org.
- Campus Ecology (The Book). Order a copy from SEAC.
- Ecodemia. By Julian Kearney. National Wildlife Federation. www.nwf.org
- "Greening the Ivory Tower." Sarah Hammond Creighton. 1998.

Indigenous Rights

- American Indian Movement: www.aimovement.org
- Native Forest Network: www.nativeforest.org

Listserves (email)

- Good email lists can be found by sending the "lists" command to listproc@essential.org, listproc@envirolink.org, and majordomo@igc.org
- SEACnet: www.seac.org/seacnet/ (subscribe to SEAC lists)

Magazines

- *Earth First! Journal*, www.earthfirstjournal.org, earthfirst@igc.org, Tel: 520-620-6900, PO Box 3023, Tucson, AZ 85702 (movement newspaper for radical environmentalists and clearinghouse for Earth First! materials)
- *In These Times*: www.inthesetimes.com, 1-800-827-0270.
- *Mother Jones*: www.motherjones.com, 1-800-334-8152.
- *Multinational Monitor*: www.essential.org/monitor/monitor.html, (202) 387-8030.
- *The Nation*: www.thenation.com, 212-209-5400.
- *The Progressive*: www.progressive.org, 1-800-827-0555.
- *Threshold*: www.seac.org/threshold/. SEAC's Magazine.
- *Z Magazine*, www.zmag.org, 8 Millfield St., Woods Hole, MA 02543. (grassroots activist oriented)

Media

- Directory: <http://newslink.org/>
- Student Press Law Center: www.splc.org, 703-807-1904.
(Advocates for the rights of student press)

Medical Waste

- Health Care Without Harm: www.noharm.org.

Misc.

- Infoshop: <http://infoshop.org/>
(Anarchist and other progressive information)
- Justicevision: wide selection of six hour videos with speakers like Noam Chomsky, Helen Caldicott, and many other progressives. Only \$10 each!
Ralph Cole, ralph@justicevision.org
- Progressive Bookstores / Infoshop directory: <http://infoshop.org/directory.html>
- www.spunk.org (Useful list of online essays on anarchism, radicalism, and much more.)
- "Tyranny of Structurelessness", essay. Jo Freedman. www.spunk.org/library/consensus/sp000760.txt

Multi-culturalism, Race, Ethnicity

- Black Radical Congress National Office: www.blackradicalcongress.com, P.O. Box 250791, New York, NY 10025. 212-969-0348.
(BRC has a youth caucus)
- SEAC People of Color Caucus email list: seac-pocc@seac.org

Organizations Misc.

- 180 Movement for Democracy and Education: www.corporations.org/democracy/, PO Box 251701, Little Rock, AR 72225. 501-244-2439.
(National progressive campus/student organization).
- Center for Environmental Citizenship: www.envirocitizen.org, 200 G Street, NE #300, Washington, D.C. 20002. 202-547-8435
- Canadian Federation of Students: www.cfs-fcee.ca, 500-170 Metcalfe St., Ottawa ON, Canada K2P 1P3. 613-232-7394.
(Progressive network of Canadian student governments).
- Young Democratic Socialists: www.ydsusa.org/, 180 Varick St., NY, NY, 10014. 212-727-8610.
- Friends of the Earth: www.foe.org, 1025 Vermont Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20005. 202-783-7444. (Puts informative reports online!)
- Greenpeace USA: www.greenpeaceusa.org (Intl: www.greenpeace.org), 702 H Street NW, Washington, DC 20001, 1-800-326-0959.
- Rainforest Action Network: www.ran.org, 221 Pine Street Suite 500, San Francisco, CA 94104. 415-398-4404.

- Ruckus Society: www.ruckus.org, 5111 Telegraph Ave. #326, Oakland, CA 94609. 510-763-7078. (Does direct action trainings)
- Students Transforming and Resisting Corporations, www.staralliance.org.
- Student Peace Action Network: www.studentpeaceaction.org, 1819 H St., NW, Suite 425, Washington, DC 20006, 202-862-9740 x3051.
- United Students Against Sweatshops: www.usasnet.org, 888 16th St. NW Suite 303, Washington, DC 20006, 202-NO-SWEAT
- United States Student Association: www.usstudents.org, 1413 K Street, N.W. 9th Floor, Washington, DC 20005. 202-347-8772.
(Progressive network of US student governments).

Organizing Guides and Resources

- Campus Organizing Guide. Center for Campus Organizing.
- EcoDefense: A Field Guide to Monkeywrenching. Dave Foreman and Bill Haywood. Available from the Earth First! Journal for \$18.
- Environmental Justice Organizing Guide. SEAC.
- Food Not Bombs Handbook: <http://home.earthlink.net/~foodnotbombs/bookindex.html>
- High School Organizing Guide. SEAC.
- Organizing for Social Change: A Manual for Activists in the 1990's. Kim Bobo.
- SEAC Organizing Guide. SEAC.
- War Resisters League Organizer Manual. 1986. <http://www.warresisters.org>. Old but good!

Paper Procurement

- The SimpleLife Guide to Tree-Free, Recycled and Certified Papers. Contact: info@simplelife.com or send \$18 to SimpleLife, P.O. Box 37, Philo, CA 95466.
- www.rethinkpaper.org
- www.visionpaper.com/index.html
- SEAC email list for paper related campaigns: seac-paper@seac.org

Peace

- Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors: www.objector.org, 510-465-1617. (Info on getting out of the military, a packet to keep the JROTC out of our schools)
- National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors: www.nonviolence.org/nisbco/
- Peace Action: www.peace-action.org, 202-862-9740.
- War Resisters League: www.warresistersleague.org, 212-228-0450.
- SEAC Militarism and Environment campaign email list: seac-mil@seac.org

Queer Issues

- Human Rights Campaign: www.hrc.org, 919 18th Street, NW, Suite 800, Washington, DC 20006. 202-628-4160.
- National Day of Silence: www.dayofsilence.org
- National Gay Lesbian Taskforce: www.nglftf.org, 1325 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20005. 202-393-5177.
- seac-queer@seac.org (Email list for SEAC's Queer Caucus)

Research

- Environmental Protection Agency databases: www.epa.gov/epahome/Data.html
- <http://cfpub.epa.gov/surf/locate/index.cfm> (Find out information on your watershed, incl. toxic releases, superfund sites, hazardous wastes, discharges, etc.)
- Right to Know website: www.rtk.net (Type in your city and find information on corporate pollution, amount, which chemical(s), and the chemicals' effects.)

Your Legal RIGHTS

- ACLU: www.aclu.org, (212) 549-2585.
- "The Right to Protest: The Basic ACLU Guide to Free Expression".
- "The Rights of Students: The Basic ACLU Guide to a Student's Rights."

Security

- Electronic Frontier Foundation: www.eff.org (electronic freedom)
- Electronic Privacy Information Center: www.epic.org
- Freedom of Information: <http://web.missouri.edu/~foiwww/index.html>, www.nfoic.org.
- Pretty Good Privacy: <http://web.mit.edu/network/pgp.html> (encryption program for files and email)

Songbooks

- Rise Up Singing: The Group Singing Songbook, Peter Blood.
- Earth First! Songbook. (Available from the EF! Journal for \$10)

Speakers

- SEAC Speaker's Bureau: www.seac.org/speakers/ 215-222-4711, workshops@seac.org

Sprawl / Transportation Issues

- Roads in England: <http://www.spunk.org/library/environ/sp000409.txt>
- www.sierraclub.org/sprawl

Student Activism

- CampusActivism.org: facilitating networking for progressive student and youth activists.
- Generation at the Crossroads: Apathy and Action on the American Campus, Paul Loeb, 1994.
- The High School Revolutionaries. Marc Libarle and Tom Seligson, Eds, 1970.
- Freedom's Web: Student Activism in an Age of Cultural Diversity, Robert A. Rhoads, 1998.
- New Voices : Student Activism in the 80s and 90s, Tony Vellela, 1988.
- SDS: Ten Years Toward a Revolution, Kirkpatrick Sale, 1973. (History of Students for a Democratic Society, HUGE 60s student organization)

Tampaction

- www.seac.org/tampons/
- www.critpath.org/~tracy/spot.html (links)
- <http://critpath.org/~tracy/village.html> (tampon article)
- www.execpc.com/~naturalc/ (has links to the best in cloth pads and periodic pride, including how to make your own which you should do)
- www.keeper.com (information about the wonderful reusable menstrual cup)
- www.mum.org/ (take a field trip to the museum of menstruation)
- seac-tampons@seac.org (SEAC email list for the Tampaction campaign)

Third Parties (and Voter Registration)

- "Democracy Unbound : Progressive Challenges to the Two Party System." David Reynolds, 1997.
- Green Parties of North America: www.greens.org
- Green Party of the US: www.gp.org.
- Federal Voter Registration Form: www.fec.gov/voteregis/vr.htm
- Independent Progressive Politics Network: www.ippn.org, PO Box 1041, Bloomfield, NJ 07003, 973-338-5398, indpol@igc.apc.org.

