

Civic Innovation Hub Supplemental Materials

A. Stormwater 101

1. EPA Definition of Green Infrastructure
2. Stormwater system when wet (Friends of the Chicago River)
3. Stormwater system when dry (Friends of the Chicago River)
4. "Green stormwater projects less likely in Black neighborhoods"

B. Community Organizing for Stormwater 101

1. Organizers Handbook selection
2. Mutual Aid
3. Cook County Resilience Hubs (Harvey World Herald article)

Foreword

Hello and welcome!

The following guide aims to support you in developing your capacity for effective community organizing. Our goal is to provide you with an introduction to organizing and encourage you to explore answers to the following questions:

Why am I called to leadership in my community? How will I move others to join me? How will we develop strategy and structure our work together? And how will we achieve our goals?

To start, here's how we define **leadership**:

Leadership is accepting responsibility for enabling others to achieve purpose in the face of uncertainty.

Here's how we define **organizing**:

Organizing is leadership that enables people to turn the resources they have into the power they need to make the change they want.

And we break down this definition further by describing the **five key practices of organizing**: telling stories, building relationships, structuring teams, strategizing, and acting. Taken together, these five practices form the basis of the organizing framework laid out in this guide. We'll refer to the above definitions throughout the guide, and unpack what they mean in depth as we work through the organizing framework. **But where does this 'framework' come from?**

Much of this framework was codified by a fellow called Marshall Ganz. Ganz developed the "Public Narrative" framework (see the Telling Stories section) based on years of organizing in and research on social movements. He cut his teeth as a young organizer in the Civil Rights movement, worked with the United Farm Workers in the 1960s and 70s, advised many unions, non-profits, and political organizations for decades, and was a key trainer and organizing strategist behind the U.S. presidential campaigns of 2008 and 2012.

It was during these campaigns that Ganz and fellow organizers (note: *millions* of other organizers) built on community organizing best practices and techniques

from past movements and codified an approach to grassroots organizing and training that many credit with winning the 2008 election. Many organizations, including Leading Change Network and New Organizing Institute, spawned or grew out of these successful campaigns, and most of this guide is adapted from their resources.

Many people and organizations paid close attention to what these American organizers were doing, and some were inspired to shift their approach and adapt this framework. Over the last several years, several organizations in Canada (and British Columbia / Coast Salish Territories, in particular) have begun to shift their strategies to focus on community organizing (that is, putting people and relationships at the centre of the work), modelled after Ganz and American campaigns. That's not to say that local movements or efforts or organizations haven't been working in this relationship-based way for a long time; they just might not take inspiration from the work of Marshall Ganz or credit themselves as 'organizers' in the same way.

Some call this framework the "snowflake model," others "distributed leadership," and still others "the Ganz model." Whatever we choose to call it, we hope to emphasize here that this approach is based in years and years of community organizing - we're truly 'standing on the shoulders of giants' employing this organizing framework, today.

In reading this guide, we ask that you keep two things in mind:

1. Remember that organizing is **above all a practice**. We learn to organize by organizing, not (just) by reading about it. This guide is meant to get you started and serve as a resource, but the best way to learn this framework is to get out and do it!
2. This organizing framework is just that, **a framework, not a formula**. Our goal here is to present some concepts and tools that many organizers have found to be effective and, at times, have been instrumental in winning campaigns.

We hope you find it useful.

Sincerely,

Shea Sinnott and Peter Gibbs,
Vancouver & Victoria, BC / Coast Salish Territories
October 2014

Introduction to Organizing

Key Concepts

- Organizing is **leadership** that enables people to turn the resources they have into the power they need to make the change they want.
- Organizing is a practice, and there are **five key leadership practices** within this practice: telling stories, building relationships, structuring teams, strategizing, and acting.
- The first question an organizer asks is “**who are my people?**” not “what is my issue?”
- Strong **relationships** are the foundation of successful organizing efforts.
- The **snowflake model** is an organizational structure that embodies leadership as that which enables others to achieve shared purpose in the face of uncertainty.

What is Organizing?

Organizing is leadership that enables people to turn the resources they have into the power they need to make the change they want. As we'll learn throughout this guide, community organizing is all about people, power, and change - it starts with people and relationships, is focused on shifting power, and aims to create lasting change. Organizing people to build the power to make change is based on the mastery of five key leadership practices: telling stories, building relationships, structuring teams, strategizing, and acting. That is, to develop our capacity for effective community organizing, we must learn:

The Five Leadership Practices

1. How to articulate a **story** of why we are called to lead, a story of the community we hope to mobilize and why we're united, and a story of why we must act.
2. How to build intentional **relationships** as the foundation of purposeful collective actions.
3. How to create **structure** that distributes power and responsibility and prioritizes leadership development.
4. How to **strategize** turning your resources into the power to achieve clear goals.
5. How to translate strategy into measurable, motivational, and effective **action**.

Though organizing is not a linear process, organizers use the first three practices (stories, relationships, structure) to build power within a community, while the last two practices (strategy, action) are about wielding that power in order to create change.

“A leader is best when people barely know he exists, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: we did it ourselves.”

– Lao Tzu

People

The first question an organizer asks is “Who are my people?” not “What is my issue?” Effective organizers put people, not issues, at the heart of their efforts. Organizing is not about solving a community’s problems or advocating on its behalf. It is about enabling the people with the problem to mobilize their own resources to solve it (and keep it solved).

Identifying a community of people is just the first step. The job of a **community** organizer is transform a community – a group of people who share common values or interests – into a constituency – a community of people who are standing together to realize a common purpose. The difference between community and **constituency** lies in the **commitment** to take action to further common goals.

For example, a community could be residents of a town that are against a new dam project, while a constituency would be residents of the town against the dam who have signed a petition to take action to stop the dam from being built.

Power

Organizing focuses on power: who has it, who doesn’t, and how to build enough of it to shift the power relationship and bring about change. Reverend Martin Luther King described power as “the ability to achieve purpose” and “the strength required to bring about social, political and economic change.”¹

In organizing, power is not a thing or trait. Organizers understand power as the influence that’s created by the relationship between interests and resources. Here, **interests** are what people need or want (e.g. to protect a river, to stay in public office, to make money), while **resources** are assets (e.g. people, energy, knowledge, relationships, and money) that can be readily used to, in the case of organizing, achieve the change you need or want. Understanding the nature of power – that it stems from the interplay between interests and resources – and that we must shift power relationships in order to bring about change, is essential for the success of our organizing efforts.

From the example above, the constituency against the dam may ask questions aimed at ‘tracking down the power’ – that is, inquiring into the relationship between actors, and particularly the interests and resources of these actors in their struggle. For instance, they might ask questions like: *what are our interests, or, what do we want? Who holds the resources needed to address these interests? What are their interests, or, what do they want?*

In doing so, the town residents may realize that their local town council is a key actor, that local councillors want to stay in office and need votes to do so, and in turn, the constituency holds the resources of people, relationships, and votes that could shift this power relationship and bring about change.

1 King, Martin Luther, Jr. (1967). “Where Do We Go From Here?” Annual Report Delivered at the 11th Convention of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Atlanta, GA. Retrieved from http://www-personal.umich.edu/~gmarkus/MLK_WhereDoWeGo.pdf

Change

In organizing, change must be specific, concrete, and significant. Organizing is not about 'raising awareness' or speech-making (though these may contribute to an organizing effort). It is about specifying a **clear goal** and mobilizing your resources to achieve it.

Indeed, if organizing is about enabling others to bring about change, and specifically, securing commitment from a group of people with shared interests to take action to further common goals, then it's critical to define exactly what those goals are.

In the case of the proposed dam project from above, the constituency against the dam must create clear, measurable goals. Note the difference between "our goal is to stop the dam" versus "our goal is to put pressure on town council in the next 3.5 months - through door-knocking, events, and local newspaper op-eds aimed at getting 1/3 of town residents to sign our petition - to pass a motion to stop the dam project."

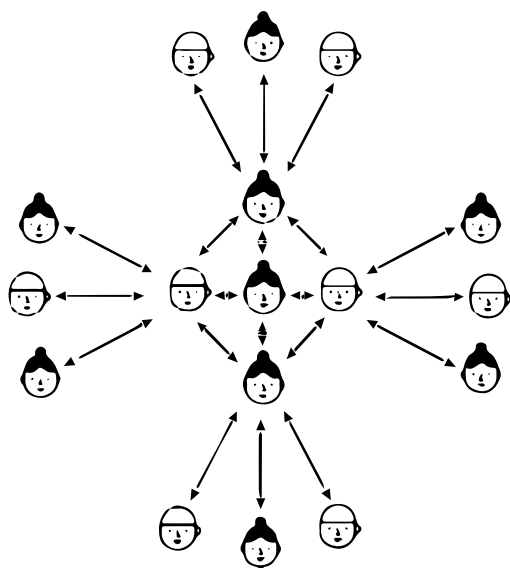
You'll learn how to come up with goals in the Strategizing section and how to achieve them in the Acting section.

The Snowflake Model: A distributed approach to leadership

We define leadership as accepting responsibility for enabling others to achieve purpose in the face of uncertainty, and the organizational model that best embodies this understanding of leadership is what we call the "**snowflake model**."

First, in the snowflake model, **leadership is distributed**. No one person or group of people holds all the power; responsibility is shared in a sustainable way, and structure aims to create mutual accountability. The snowflake is made up of interconnected teams working together to further common goals.

Second, the snowflake model is based above all on enabling others. A movement's strength stems from its capacity and **commitment to develop leadership** and in the snowflake model, everyone is responsible for identifying, recruiting, and developing leaders. Leaders develop other leaders who, in turn, develop other leaders, and so on.



The practise of coaching is the key means by which organizers in the snowflake develop leadership. See the Coaching section for more details on what coaching in organizing is and how to practise your coaching skills.

You'll learn about the snowflake model in greater detail in the Structuring Teams section, but for now, reflect on the organizational structures that you've been a part of in your work, school, or other areas of your life. How might you draw out those structures? Where did you fit into those structures, and how did you feel in your role?

Now, take a look at diagram 1. Note the faces, the clusters of faces, and the links between them. How might the snowflake model compare to the structures you've been a part of in the past? As you'll see in the Structuring Teams section, the snowflake model is unique from typical organizing or leadership structures in that responsibility is distributed and it prioritizes leadership development above all.

In closing, keep the snowflake model structure and the core tenets of people, power, and change in mind as we dive deeper into the the five practices of organizing: telling stories, building relationships, structuring teams, strategizing, and acting.

Further Reading

Ganz, M. (2010). "Leading Change: Leadership, Organization, Social Movements." In N. Nohria & R. Khurana (Eds.), *the Handbook of Leadership Theory and Practice* (pp. 509-550). Danvers: Harvard Business School Press.

For a full list of writings by Marshall Ganz, visit <http://marshallganz.com/publications>

For readings and training resources from the New Organizing Institute, visit <http://neworganizing.com/toolbox>

What is Mutual Aid?

Retrieved at: <https://www.detroitcommunitywealth.org/blog-1/2020/3/26/what-is-mutual-aid>

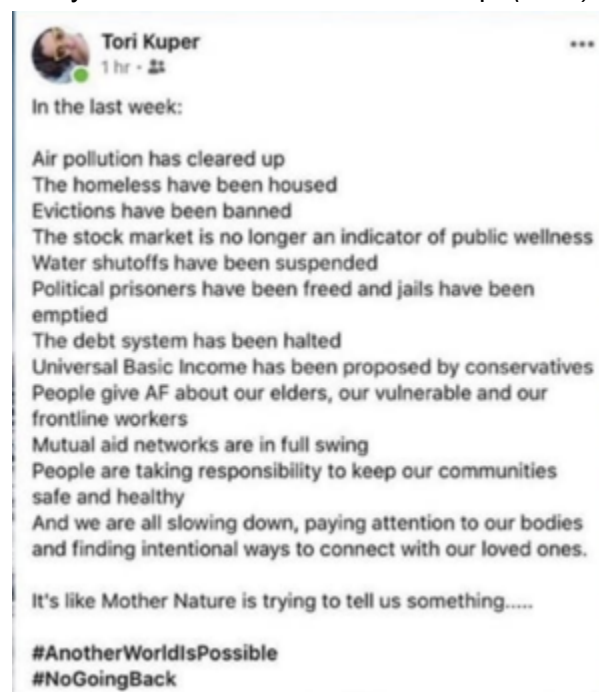
In the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, you might have logged onto Facebook and joined a local, or national mutual-aid group. I was the 400th or so member of the Metro Detroit Mutual-Aid network, now a group of over 6,000 just over a week later. The Facebook group is led by volunteer moderators, and users can ask questions and post resources and information related to the coronavirus outbreak, and about where to access resources for food, how to get their water turned back on, news about pauses in tax foreclosure and how to talk to your landlord about pausing rent, etc. People have been tremendously forthcoming with information, ideas, organizing group chats and video calls to talk deeper about organizing to help residents and community members get through this crisis.



The Free African Society was one of the first mutual aid societies established by Black people in the United States. Mutual aid societies are autonomous institutions created to provide their members with the basic needs of everyday life — food, clothing, shelter, health care, burial insurance, etc. — as well as providing protection and sanctuary. The Free African Society was started by Richard Allen and Absalom Jones in Philadelphia in 1787. Allen and Jones later started the first Independent Black church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1816. (Atlanta Black Star)

Like me, you might have joined a mutual aid network for the first time, but the concept and practice of mutual aid are certainly not new. In fact, mutual aid societies predate modern welfare. A mutual aid associations is defined as, “associations formed voluntarily for the purpose of providing their members with financial assistance in case of need”. It also includes any kind of assistance with essentials, including food and healthcare.

Mutual Aid societies have a deep history in African American communities for generations in the US. W E. B. DuBois called "the first wavering step of a people toward organized social life." The earliest mutual assistance societies among free blacks in the United States to navigate the oppressive and restrictive welfare system controlled by whites. These societies included The Free African Society, New York Society for Mutual Relief, Negro Mutual Benefit Societies of Philadelphia, among others. Later societies sought to promote education and job training, especially for newly arrived African Americans, freemen and fugitive slaves. Membership of mutual aid societies also had spiritual, moral, and philosophical components. These practices were in conjunction with financial assistance when illness and death struck the family. Most mutual aid societies at this time were short-lived and not always well-documented, but the evidence is clear that such groups existed and contributed positively to the free black and slave community. While the number of societies attests to the wide-ranging efforts of northern free blacks, most were hampered by low funds and low membership. (VCU).



In the nineteenth century in the United States, mutual aid societies were part of a robust series of informal and formal groups including lecture and debate groups, unions, cooperatives, and political activist groups.

Where are mutual aid and mutual benefit societies today? Many credit unions, trade associations, and mutual savings banks, as well as modern fraternal orders, can trace their roots back to these mutual benefit societies. Many benefit societies also form around cultural and ethnic groups- in the U.S. particularly immigrant groups, who form lending circles, child care cooperatives, or lend for births and funerals, for example.

In a competitive and individualist western world, it can be hard to notice the concept of mutual aid, of sharing money for mutual benefit. Yet, there is nothing like an international pandemic to

catalyze these large networks to form again, this time on social media platforms, which are widely accessible and free to join.

Where will mutual aid go from here? Further! I hope. Right now we are seeing mutual aid networks all over the world to respond to the Coronavirus, each creating systems and many creating new systems to support their communities. New systems are being created! We are practicing what we are preaching right now. Right now we are supporting the most at-risk populations, reaching out to loved ones or people we have not always been in touch with, we are deeply checking in with how each other is doing. We are realizing too, that the most vulnerable workers, low wage labor, are also the most necessary workers, the people who keep food on our table and keep our facilities clean, and behind the scenes systems running. Hopefully, if we want, because ultimately it is up to us, we can keep these systems of community care going. We can keep fighting for social and economic welfare, but this time with a very recent example that it was all real, it was all critically necessary for a future world that is more resilient, and more responsive to an emergency, because this certainly will not be the last time we will all need to rapidly respond.

Sources

Hanagan, Michael. *International Review of Social History*, vol. 43, no. 3, 1998, pp. 475–478. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/44583420. Accessed 26 Mar. 2020.

W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Negro Church* (Atlanta University Press, 1903), p. 124.

Barga, Michael. *Social Welfare History Project*. Virginia Commonwealth University.

Excerpted from ***Environmental hubs. A comprehensive plan: Climate resilience projects in the south suburbs take root***

March 30, 2023 at 2:06 p.m. CDT

Retrieved at:

<https://harveyworld.org/articles/health-the-environment/comprehensive-plan-environmental-hubs-project-breakdown>

Climate resilience hubs

Cook County plans to establish three “resilience hubs” across the Southland area.

The hubs will function through existing physical facilities that are already “community focal points,” said Sarah Edwards, Sustainability Program Manager for Cook County. Designation as a “resilience hub” will expand the program or facility’s capacity “to provide additional services to address chronic community stressors.”

Edwards defined resilience, within the scope of the project, as “the ability of people and their communities to anticipate, accommodate and adapt amid changing climate conditions and hazard events.”

The hubs are a project of the Cook County Equity Fund, a larger plan that was established by Cook County President Toni Preckwinkle during the budget process for the fiscal year 2021 as a means to address historical and continued disinvestment particularly in Black and Latino communities—and the resulting pervasive disparities across the County.

Funding for the Equity Fund comes from the over \$1 billion in federal funding Cook County received through the American Rescue Plan Act. The Equity Fund plan is broken down into six pillars, each a strategic approach to addressing inequities and disparities across the County.

According to the County’s [Racial Equity Fund Progress Report](#), published in December 2022, the “Sustainable Communities” pillar aims to “improve both public and environmental health not only through investments in technical assistance and financial resources in partnership with trusted community-based organizations but also by developing an environmental justice policy that incorporates environmental and equity impacts into our decision-making.”



Nearby Dixmoor has long struggled with water access. Village Hall as shown June 28, 2022.

HWH / Amethyst J. Davis

The Cook County Department of Environment and Sustainability and the Cook County Department of Emergency Management and Regional Security are teaming up for the project.

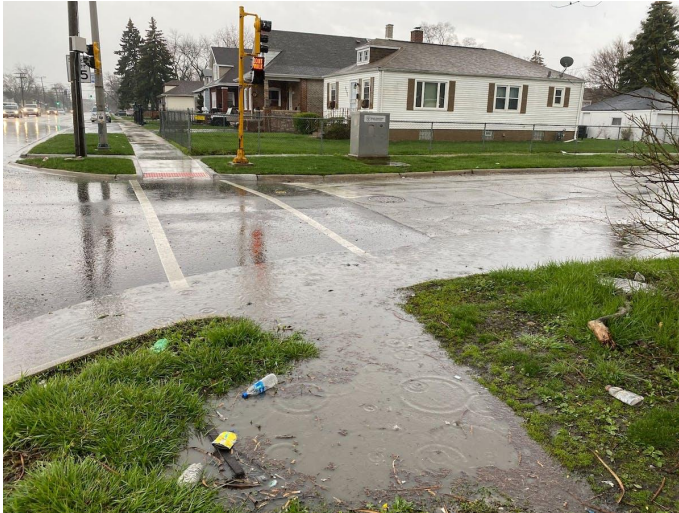
By bringing different Cook County departments into the planning effort, Edwards said her team is “not just thinking about the environmental goals, or the emergency goals, or the economic goals, but really thinking about them all together.”

A “community-driven effort” will guide the process of determining which locations work for the hubs, Edwards said. Before that process can kick off, Edwards and her team have to finish working through a list of “eligible communities” they compiled based on the Social Vulnerability Index that was established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

SVI refers to “the potential negative effects on communities caused by external stresses on human health,” according to the [Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry](#).

To best determine where the resilience hubs would be “an appropriate resilience measure” and where there’s the greatest need, Edwards said the list of eligible communities is evaluated alongside the CCDEMR’s [Hazard Mitigation Plan](#).

From there, Edwards said her team will reach out to municipal and community leaders to discuss their interest in the development of a resilience hub in their community. Once interest is established, then the community input process for choosing the specific facility will begin.



Water pools on the corner of 148th Street and Morgan, as shown April 22, 2022. HWH / Amethyst J. Davis

By using an existing facility or community focal point, Edwards said they hope to build on pre-established trust and networks of support that residents already rely on.

The goal is to “provide support before, during and after emergency events,” Edwards said.

Possible “resiliency solutions” for the selected facilities could be energy efficiency improvements, green infrastructure improvements, flooding preparedness, and stocking emergency-preparedness materials. “It’ll really depend on which facility is chosen and what the community feels like they need,” Edwards said.

Edwards said they’re “looking to install solar and battery backup” to all of the resilience hub locations “so they can function off-grid to provide support during emergencies.”

Though the overall timeline won’t be clear until the specific hub locations and resilience models are planned out, Edwards anticipates they will be working for “the next few years” to complete the project.