ORGANIZING & MOVEMENT-BUILDING

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ORGANIZING & MOVEMENT-BUILDING SECTION

SUMMARY

This training is excerpted from SOUL's Youth Organizing for Community Power Manual. It is designed to help participants to think about their organizational work in terms of building a broader movement by using visuals and the metaphor of a car to develop an understanding of the different components of a social movement. An alternative metqaphor of a boat is also provided.

GOALS

To help participants develop and articulate the idea that our organizing should focus not just on building a certain organization, or winning a specific campaign, but rather that we need to be doing our organizing to build a long-term movement

To help participants develop an understanding of what a movement is and about the role that organizing plays in movement-building

MATERIALS

Butcher Paper

Images for Building Movement Car (or Boat alternative)

Movement Car Chart handout

TIME

1 hour, 15 minutes

CREDITS

This training is based on exercises developed by SOUL. The illustrations were done by Kim McGillicuddy from the Youth Justice Coalition.

OPENING VISUALIZATION

✳ Today we've talked about how the power structure is set up, and about what organizing is. Now let's take a step backand talk about what we're fighting for.

✳ Let's all close our eyes for a minute and imagine the world we're fighting to win. What do you see?

Ask people to say words or images that are coming to mind.

✳ Now put your imagination on pause and rewind the tape until you get to the movement that won us this new world. Give yourself a minute to imagine it – what are people doing?

Ask people to say what that movement looks like.

✳ We are a long way from that world, the world we want to win. Like we talked about earlier, a tiny amount of people hold most of the wealth and power in the world, while our communities face intense poverty and violence. We're looking for a huge change of power, and it's going to take a powerful movement to win that level of liberation. Today we're going to break down what a movement is, and what role organizing can play in building one.

MOVEMENT EXAMPLES

✳ Let's get some examples of the movements that have come before us. People from our homelands and our communities here have been fighting for freedom for centuries.

✳ What are some examples of times our communities have fought back and won victories?

Ask participants to do more than just name different movements. Ask them to tell the story a little. Draw out: What were people fighting for? How did they fight? What did they win?

But what is a movement really? It's hard for us to imagine because there hasn't been a real movement in this country within our lifetimes.

Put up the following definition on butcher paper. Read it off to participants.

A movement is a large-scale sustained mobilizations of <u>masses</u> of individuals and organizations united in common action by a common issue or vision. Movements are <u>bigger than any single organizations' efforts</u> although <u>organizations are key</u> to developing sustainable and effective movements. For the most part, movements are <u>united around a common issue or vision,</u> but they are <u>larger than any one ideology</u> or belief system. In general, social movements draw on a <u>wide range of tactics and methods</u>.

Use the Civil Rights Movement to illustrate these points:

- There were many organizations that played a key role in building and sustaining the Civil Rights Movement: the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Commitment (SNCC), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). But the Civil Rights Movement was much larger than all of these organizations put together. These organizations influenced the development of the movement, but they could not dictate its overall development.

- Everyone who participated in the Civil Rights Movement believed in equality and civil rights for all people, but that movement contained people who believed that equality could be won through governmental reform and people who believed that equality could only be won through revolutionary change.

- The Civil Rights Movement used a huge range of tactics, from lawsuits brought to the Supreme Court to non-violent civil disobedience to mass marches on Washington to armed activity. While some people in the movement disagreed with each of these tactics, they were all considered part of the movement itself.

ANATOMY OF A MOVEMENT

✳ We're going to present the **ANATOMY OF A MOVEMENT** to break down the components of a movement more specifically. We're going to do that by mapping out the different pieces of a car

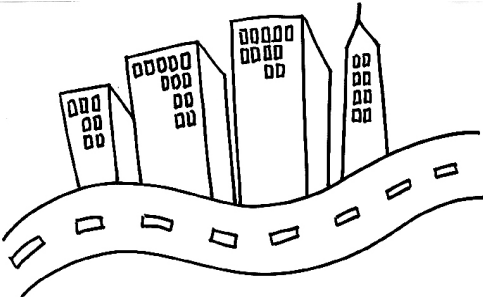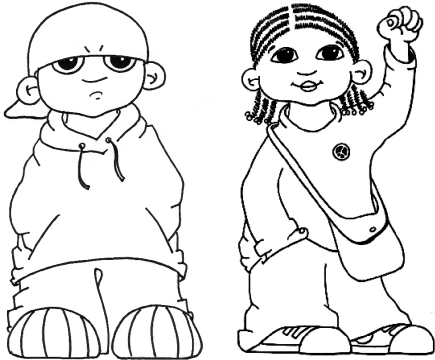✳ **Why are we using the metaphor of a car?**

- On a basic level, we need something that can move people in a powerful way.
- A car is complex. There are a lot of parts that fit together, and they need to move in a coordinated way. If any of these pieces is missing, you won't be able to move.
- To build a car, you need knowledge about the science of building cars. Building movements requires a large amount of knowledge and study of history.
- As times change, the make and model of cars also changes. Our movements must also evolve to reflect the new conditions.
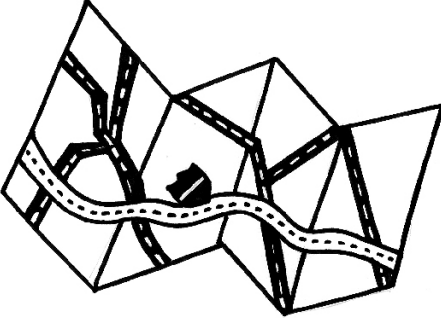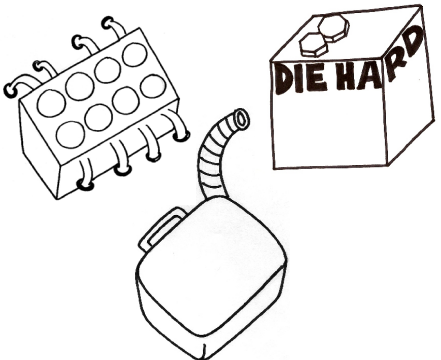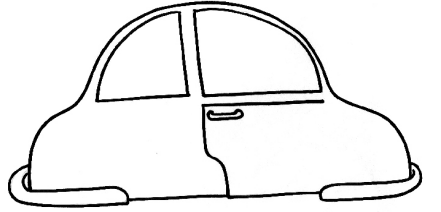
Let participants share other reasons why a car analogy is helpful in understanding movements.
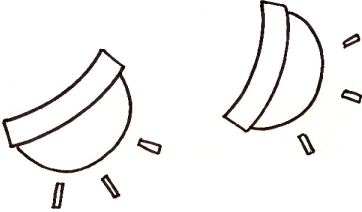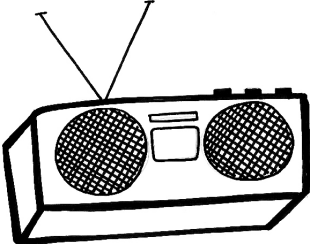
✳ **There are many different kinds of movement cars (some movements are like tanks while others are more like convertibles), and their accessories vary greatly, but we tried to pull out the things that all movement cars have in common.**
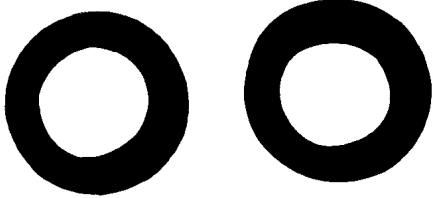
As you go through each component, have participants find pieces of the car from the floor. Once they've found the appropriate piece, they should bring it up to the butcher paper and put it in place. After the piece has been placed up, you should attach the movement component label to the image and read out the description of the component.

MOVEMENT CAR CHART

Car Part Image	Component of Movement	Notes to Pull Out
ROAD	**SOCIAL CONDITIONS**	Movements don't happen out of nowhere, and they don't happen just because we want them to. People are always fighting and resisting injustice, but movements only develop at certain historical moments: when an injustice becomes incredibly clear, when enough power has been built, when enough consciousness has been raised, when there's a crisis in the world.
PASSENGERS	**MASSES OF PEOPLE**	Successful movements need huge masses of people to be effective-- millions of people. So this car should be really filled up, like when you're going home from going out and there's only one car so people are sitting on each others' laps.
DRIVERS	**LEADERSHIP**	All movements need leaders. Just like with driving, leading takes skill and training, and it really doesn't work to have everyone trying to hold onto the steering wheel at once. But different movements distribute the task of driving differently. Some movements have the same drivers all the time; other movements rotate driving. And the different drivers figure out where to go differently. Some drivers just look at the road. Others ask the other people in the car for directions, and others do it by looking at a map. The most effective drivers do all of these.

Car Part Image	Component of Movement	Notes to Pull Out
ROADMAP	**STRATEGY**	We need strategy for the same reason we need maps--we need a plan to know where we're going. Unfortunately, there is no MapQuest for the movement in which we can enter "Starting Point: Oppression" and "Driving to: Liberation" and get back the answer "Distance: 50 years" and "Directions: Turn left at the war, veer towards the youth movement." On top of that, the roads keep changing! And since a lot of us are still new drivers, we don't know our way around easily. So we have a lot of learning to do.
ENGINE (WITH DIFFERENT PARTS)	**GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS (BY SECTORS)**	The car can't move without the engine. Grassroots organizations are the driving force of the movement. But an engine is a complicated thing with a lot of different parts. That's true of movement organizations, too. We need organizations for young people, for workers, for women, for different faith communities and so on. And they all need to work together to create movement.
CAR BODY	**COALITIONS AND NETWORKS**	The car body holds together all the parts of the car and lets the car function as a unit. Networks and coalitions are crucial places where organizations can coordinate their work.

Car Part Image	Component of Movement	Notes to Pull Out
STEERING WHEEL	**PARTIES**	The steering wheel lets the people in the car move the car in the right direction. Political parties play that same role. Almost all movements have political parties, meaning political organizations in which people come together from different parts of the movement to advance their agendas. But parties look really different in different movements. There are mass electoral parties like the Workers' Party in Brazil or the ANC in South Africa, and there are revolutionary parties like the Communist Party in Cuba or the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. There's a lot of debate about how the steering wheel should relate to the rest of the car. But the big question iswho gets to do the steering--the driver only, or all the passengers.
HEADLIGHTS	**UNIFYING VISION**	Headlights help when it's dark and we need to see where we're going. That's the same role a unifying vision plays in our movement. Movements need tofocus on a shared central message, but also be broad enough to include people with different beliefs.
STEREO	**CULTURE**	The movement is a long journey,and just like on a road trip, people are going to get really uncomfortable and unhappy if there's no music or culture along the way. Culture gives life to our political work.

Car Part Image	Component of Movement	Notes to Pull Out
WHEELS	**RANGE OF TACTICS**	If you only had one wheel, you wouldn't get very far. We need a range of different tactics and methods in our movement. We need a lot of different kinds of work to be a part of our movement (media work, militant actions, lawsuits, mass marches and so on), and we need them to move together in the same direction at the same time.

Like we said at the beginning, different cars have different accessories on top of these basics. Some movements are equipped with GPS systems; that is, they have a technology apparatus. Some movements have armed response systems: armed movements. Some can operate off-road, working both above-ground and below-ground. Some run on bio-diesel fuel because they want to look at the internal impacts of our movement on the world and each other. But they all have these fundamental components.

✳ **Let's talk about how organizing fits into this picture.**

✳ **What role does organizing play in building the movement? Which pieces of the car does organizing help to build?**

    Examples:

- Build organizations that are the basis of the movement
- Develops leaders for the movement
- Increases the amount of people involved in the movement.

✳ **How does organizing need to work so that it functions as a part of the movement car instead of as a lonely engine part?**

    Examples:

- We need our organizations to work together instead of arguing with each other.
- We need to develop a long-term vision.
- We need to remember where we're headed in the long run.

CLOSING AGITATION

Organizing is hard work and takes a lot of time and focus. We can get caught up in the day-to-day needs of our organizations: making copies, getting food for a meeting, planning a good action, supporting our members. We can lose sight of the bigger picture of what were fighting for. But if we're serious about winning real change for our communities, we need to think about building a movement and not just about building our organizations. Movements don't come out of nowhere--they have to be built.

That doesn't mean we shouldn't build our organizations; the movement wouldn't survive without them. But it does mean that there's more we have to do. We have to build both our organizations and the movement--it's not one or the other.

There are a lot of organizing groups in the world that don't have this vision. They want to focus on winning immediate issues and building up their own organizations. This is one of the things that makes youth organizing special: we're trying to build a movement for full freedom for our communities. We need to keep this in sight when we're caught up in the day-to-day of our work:we're organizing to build the movement. Let's carry this way of looking at the work into the rest of the trainings this week. We are organizing to build a movement, and we're trying to do it on a massive scale.

ANATOMY OF A MOVEMENT: BOAT ALTERNATIVE

30 MINUTES

We're going to present the **ANATOMY OF A MOVEMENT** to break down the components of a movement more specifically. We're going to do that by mapping out the different pieces of a boat.

Why are we using the metaphor of a boat?

- On a basic level, we need something that can move people in a powerful way.
- A boat is complex. There are a lot of parts that fit together, and they need to move in a coordinated way. If any of these pieces is missing, you won't be able to move right.
- To build a boat, you need knowledge about the science of building boats. Building movements requires a large amount of knowledge and study of history.
- As times change, the make and model of boats also changes. Our movements-must also evolve to reflect new conditions.

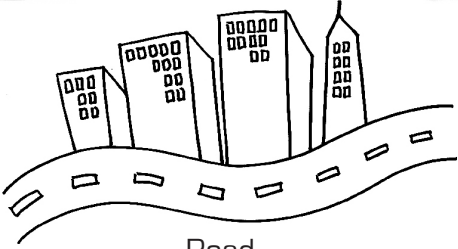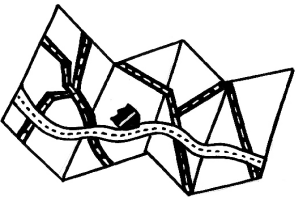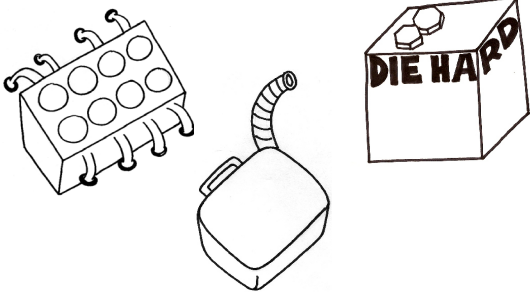*Let participants share other reasons why a boat analogy is helpful in understanding movements.*

There are many different kinds of movement boats (some movements are like canoes while others are more like warships), and their accessories vary greatly, but we tried to pull out the things that all movement boats have in common.

As you go through each component, have participants find pieces of the boat from the floor. Once they've found the appropriate piece, they should bring it up to the butcher paper and put it in place. After the piece has been placed up, you should attach the movement component label to the image and read out the description of the component.

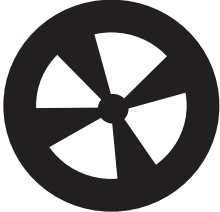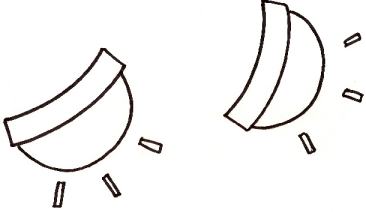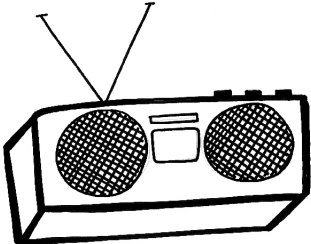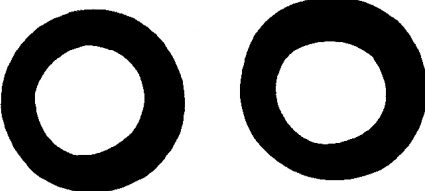| COMPONENT OF MOVEMENT	BOAT PART	NOTES TO PULL OUT
Social Conditions	**River**	Movements don't happen out of nowhere, and they don't happen just because we want them to. People are always fighting and resisting injustice, but movements only develop at certain historical moments: when an injustice becomes incredibly clear, when enough power has been built, when enough consciousness has been raised, when there's a crisis in the world.
Masses of People	**Passengers**	Successful movements need huge masses of people to be effective–millions of people. So this boat should be really filled up.
Leadership	**Pilots**	All movements need leaders. Just like with steering a boat, leading takes skill and training, and it really doesn't work to have everyone trying to hold onto the rudder at once. But different movements distribute the task of steering differently. Some movements have the same pilots all the time; other movements rotate steering. And the different pilots figure out where to go differently. Some pilots just look at the water. Others ask the other people in the boat for directions, and others do it by looking at a map. The most effective pilots do all of these.
Strategy	**Map**	We need strategy for the same reason we need maps–we need a plan to know where we're going. And the river keeps changing. Since a lot of us are still new to sailing, we don't know our way around easily. So we have a lot of learning to do.
Grassroots Organizations (By Sectors)	**Oars**	The boat can't move well without the oars. Grassroots organizations are the driving force of the movement. But using oars is complicated. You need multiple oars to move well, and they need to work together. That's true of movement organizations, too. We need organizations for young people, for workers, for women, for different faith communities and so on. And they all need to work together to create movement.

Coalitions and Networks	**Boat Body**	The boat body holds together all the parts of the boat and lets the boat function as a unit. Networks and coalitions are crucial places where organizations can come together and coordinate their work.
Parties	**Rudder**	The rudder lets the people in the boat move the boat in the right direction. Political parties play that same role. Almost all movements have political parties, meaning political organizations in which people come together from different parts of the movement to advance their agendas. But parties look really different in different movements. There are mass electoral parties like the Workers' Party in Brazil or the ANC in South Africa, and there are revolutionary parties like the Communist Party in Cuba or the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. There's a lot of debate about how the rudder should relate to the rest of the boat. But the big question is who gets to do the steering–the pilot only, or all the passengers.
Unifying Vision	**Lights**	Lights help when it's dark and we need to see where we're going. That's the same role a unifying vision plays in our movement. Movements need to focus on a shared central message, but also be broad enough to include people with different beliefs.
Culture	**Drum**	The movement is a long journey,and just like on a trip, people are going to get really uncomfortable and unhappy if there's no music or culture along the way. Culture gives life to our political work.
Range of Tactics	**Sails**	If you only had one little sail, you wouldn't get very far. We need a range of different tactics and methods in our movement. We need a lot of different kinds of work to be a part of our movement (media work, militant actions, lawsuits, mass marches and so on), and we need them to move together in the same direction at the same time.

MOVEMENT CAR ANATOMY HANDOUT

Car Part	Component of Movement	Notes
Road	Social Conditions	
Passengers	Masses of People	
Drivers	Leadership	
Roadmap	Strategy	
Engine Parts	Grassroots Organizations (sectors)	

Car Part	Component of Movement	Notes
Car Body	Coalitions and Networks	
Steering Wheel	Parties	
Headlights	Unifying Vision	
Stereo	Culture	
Wheels	Range of Tactics	

SOCIAL CONDITIONS

MASSES OF PEOPLE

LEADERSHIP

STRATEGY

GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS (by sectors)

COALITIONS & NETWORKS

PARTIES

UNIFYING VISION

CULTURE

RANGE OF TACTICS