

# Organizing at the Grassroots Level



Invest In Our Children  
They Are Our Future!

# My perspective and lens

Mother

Non Profit Sector

Provincial Government since 1998

Provincial and Federal Politics

Municipal Government

International Aid



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# Why do we need to organize as a PAC?



**Community organization** is part of a process that brings people together to collectively address problems, concerns or issues with the goal of enhancing self-determination, achieving greater equality, and affecting a shift in power relationships to benefit members of oppressed **communities**.

- Empowering to students, parents, teachers and community
- Providing a Voice to all involved
- Getting organized helps deliver an effect and cohesive message
- Creates change at different levels that impact children, youth and families

# Organization Doesn't Have to Be Boring



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Community Organizing can mean:

- A parade, rally or day of action to create momentum.
- Social Media Campaign.
- Online or handwritten petition.
- Hosting focus groups, public forums and networking.
- Developing key contacts in the community.

Some examples I will show you from the last year on various projects.

“After the Election, I Hope for Affordable Child Care

'Accessible' spaces needed, says mom. Part of a series on dreams beyond  
Oct.19.” TYEE



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MONTRÉAL, 2014

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le leadership  
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“Empowered Mothers event hopes to inspire moms to raise their voices, while raising their kids” CBC



# Case Study from Single Mothers Alliance



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- End Your Provincial Clawback was a success and took community organizing to reach the goal.
- Identified need and policy issue: Mothers were being clawed back child support off their income assistance or disability payments.
- Gathered key partners: First Call, West Coast Leaf, Legal Aid, BC Acorn, MLA and women with lived experiences willing to share their stories.
- Letter writing campaign, petitions from constituents and published letters to powers that be from credible sources.
- Share stories on social media and in media campaign. Stories are personal and make an impact.
- Single mothers on income assistance and disability visit the legislature with Michelle Mungall, NDP MLA Nelson-Creston, Social Development Critic.

# Case Study from Single Mothers Alliance



- BC Acorn holds a Mother's Day 'Poverty Potluck' highlighting clawback takes nutrition and food from BC's poorest kids.
- #EndtheClawback CAMPAIGN MEDIA COVERAGE
- Victory Achieved! The biggest social services announcement was, the government will no longer take away child support payments from single parents on income assistance. It will cost \$24 million over the next three years to rescind this policy.
- “That’s absolutely amazing,” said Viveca Ellis, co-founder of the Single Mothers’ Alliance BC, a plaintiff in a lawsuit filed against the province over this policy. *LORI CULBERT, VANCOUVER SUN 02.17.2015*

# Key Components in Organizing



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- Know your group/community you are organizing.
- Use storytelling in your campaign, training and coaching.
- Involve key community mobilizers who know neighbourhood and mobilizers.
- Know the deadlines and key decision dates - create a google calendar for your group and google group for effect email use.
- Build your lists of volunteers - Mailchimp/Nation Builder/Excel
- Develop a standard meeting time and place the group depends on.
- Be accessible to diverse needs (including language, near transportation hub, washrooms that are inclusive to group etc).
- Connect to values

# Key Components in Organizing

- Create a social media campaign (Facebook, twitter, website etc)
- Assign Volunteer Roles and have a Volunteer Coordinator.
- Develop a Briefing Note for your MLA. 1 page and 1 page Backgrounder.
- Request a meeting with your MLA. Be prepared and clear on your request.
- Know how many constituents in your MLA's riding you have support from on your issue. Have signatures online or handwritten.
- Involve and communicate with other groups with similar purpose in your plan.
- Hold a Celebration at the end of the project or year. Often these volunteers will need to be utilized again in the future.



# Next Steps



- Consider creating roles for your team such as social media liason. This assists in organizing, ownership and time management.
- Develop a short term and long term action plan and share it with relevant groups.
- Select a platform for communication, building lists and data.
- Create a to do list that is shared with the team and updated regularly.
- Try to remain optimistic and focused on your goal when leading the group in meetings.
- Allow for flexibility and new ideas without abandoning the objective.

# Resources



DPAC Liaison: <http://vancouverdpac.org/>

FACE: <https://facebc.wordpress.com/>

PAN: <http://www.panvancouver.ca/>

MLA Playdate: <https://mlaplaydate.wordpress.com/>

BC Parents of Special Needs Children:

<https://equitableaccesstoeducation.wordpress.com/>

Find Your MLA: <https://www.leg.bc.ca/learn-about-us/members>