



Relational Organizing

People working together can achieve so much more than those working alone. Organized people are influential in their communities. They can plan and implement campaigns to educate their communities or influence public policy.

Organizing people by intentionally reaching out and getting to know them is called relational organizing. To pursue relational organizing, be intentional about networking for potential allies and setting-up individual meetings.

When holding an individual meeting:

- Be up front about why you are holding the meeting.
- Ask questions of a public nature, not a private one; Public questions are the type that a person would not be uncomfortable having the general public know the answer to. Your questions should not violate a person's sense of privacy.
- Ask open-ended questions; try to avoid questions that can be answered yes or no.
- Probe and ask follow-up questions. Ask "why?" and "would you tell me more about that?"

Each individual interview will be unique, but here are some questions you can use to get started:

- What are you most concerned about in the world?
- Why are you interested in this cause?
- What experiences or talents do you think that you bring?
- What would you like to accomplish in life?
- What have been your major involvements in life?
- What have you accomplished in your life that you feel most proud of?
- What else would you like to accomplish?
- Who do you know who shares a concern for this cause? (Follow-up with a request for permission to contact each person mentioned.)

Activity: Individual Meetings

Break-up into pairs. One person in the pair should spend five minutes interviewing the other. After five minutes of interviewing, change partners such that the second set of pairings is one person who was interviewed the first time and one person who was not. In this second pairing, the person who was interviewed the first time should interview the person who was not.

Activity: Discussion

What were the most interesting things that you learned about the other women in the group? Did anyone have skills or talents that could be useful in leadership or advocacy? Did anyone have a social network that could be pursued to find potential allies?