

Building Power in Place

A Municipalist Organizing Toolkit *Zine*

Printing Instructions:

- Orientation: Landscape
- Print on both sides of paper: *Flip on short edge*
- Select: Pages 2-13
- Size: Fit

To create the booklet, staple in the center between pages 11 and 12, and fold all pages in half!

ACCESS THE TOOLKIT AT:
MUNICIPALISM.ORG



BUILDING POWER IN PLACE

A MUNICIPALIST
ORGANIZING
ZINE



A WORKBOOK



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DECODING MUNICIPALISM

REFLECT ON YOUR INTENTIONS IN USING THIS TOOLKIT

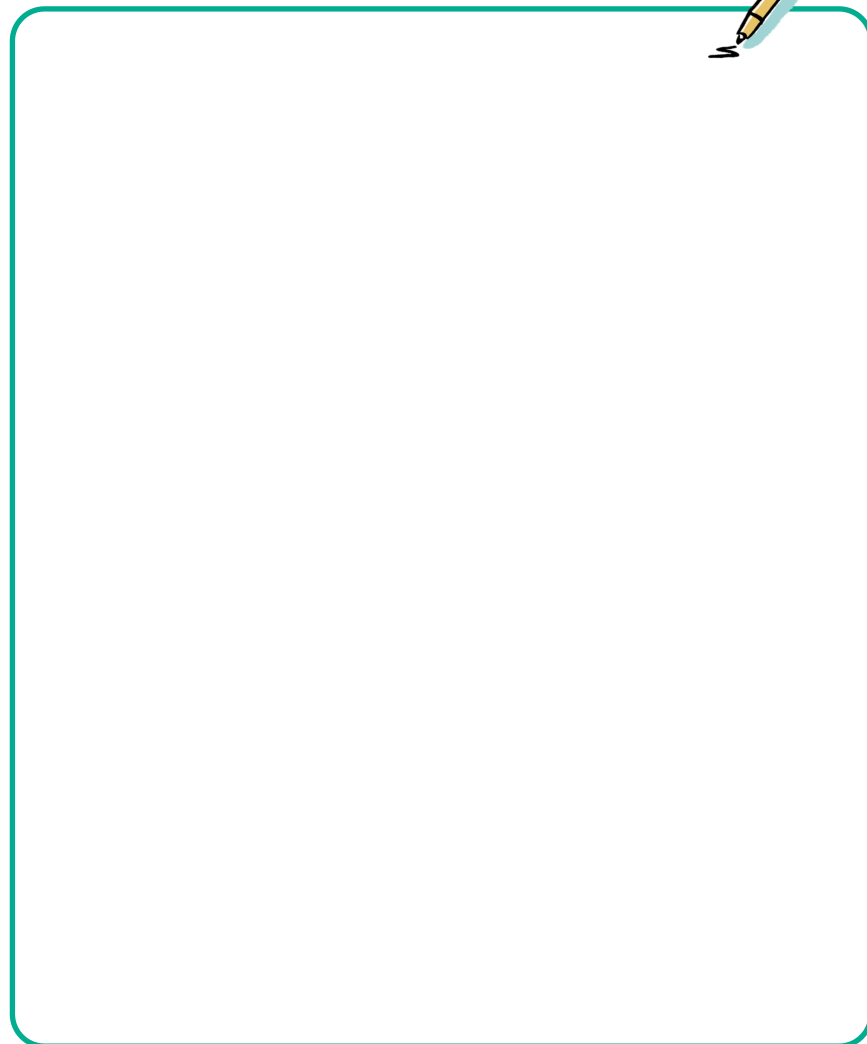
What are you hoping to gain from using this toolkit?
How can you nurture these goals?



A SAFE EXPERIMENT

After completing the Gauge My Group assessment, consider the ways that you can build your collective skills moving forward.

Reflect upon and sketch out a proposal for a safe experiment your group could take to become better organized.



TAKING ACTION

GAUGE MY GROUP

On a scale of 1 to 5, assess your organizing project to see where you stand in the following areas of group development.

- ☐ Every member of the group has a clear idea of our shared vision and goals around which we have organized.
- ☐ We have taken a collective inventory of the resources, skills, and capacities of each member to understand how we fit together as a group.
- ☐ All members of our group have strong bonds of trust with one another.
- ☐ We have a clear and consistent process for making decisions that we could explain briefly to a new person.
- ☐ Pathways to participation are clear to current members and could be easily explained to a new person.
- ☐ Our group has an agreed-upon procedure for resolving tension, conflict, or harm between members that is regularly evaluated.

What issues impact your town, neighborhood, and city the most?



What energizes you about your movement space?
How can you hold on to this energy?

BASE BUILDING

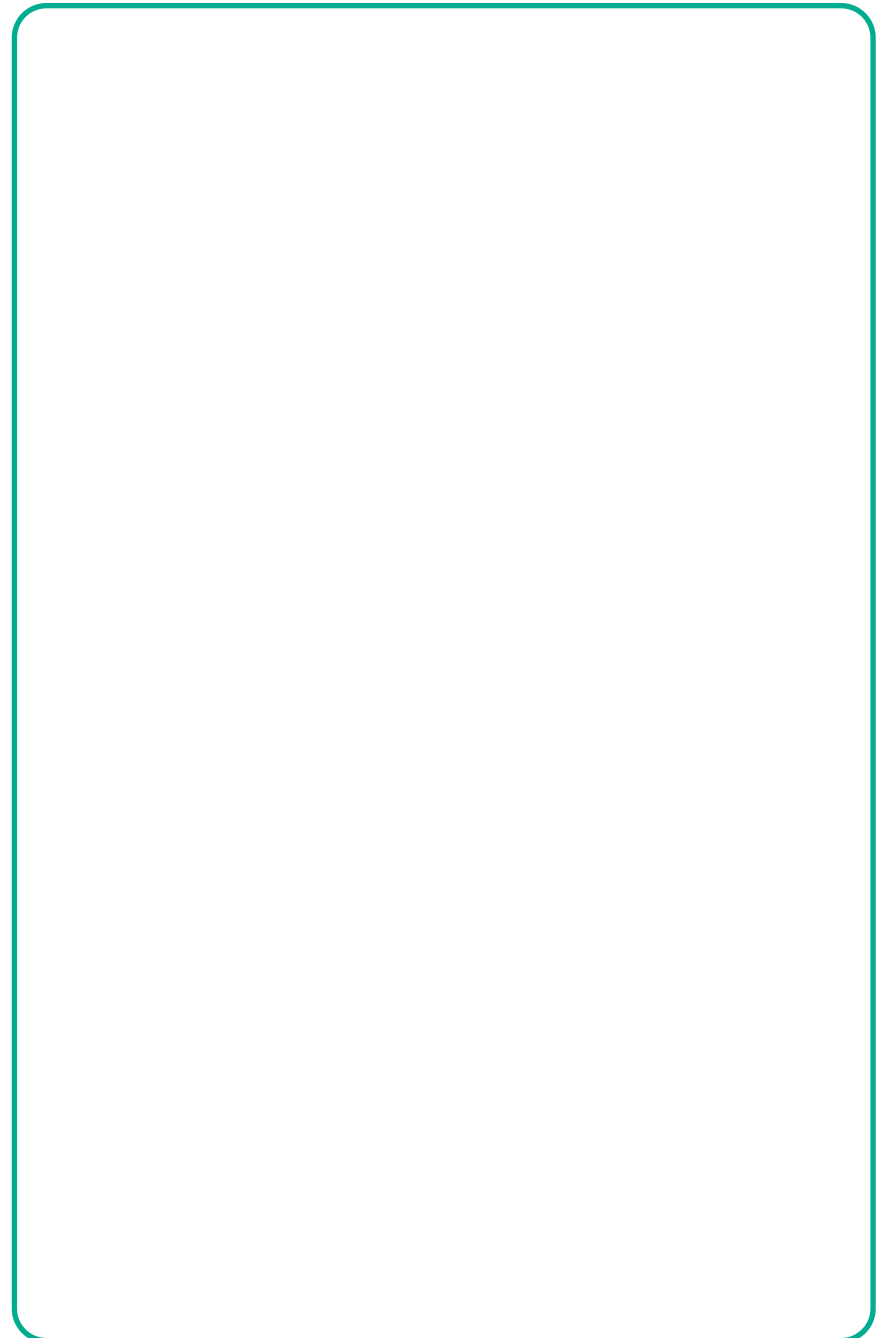
ORGANIZING THROUGH ACTION

EXERCISE 1:

Consider the problems that affect your immediate community.

- What problems can be effectively responded to (if not resolved) by a small group of impacted people, without systemic or political change? -----> Initial neighborhood organizing nucleus
- What problems seem too big to tackle now but could be effectively responded to by all of your neighbors coming together? -----> Community mobilization
- What problems necessitate some kind of political collision with capitalism, entrenched local interests, or state power to be fixed in any real way? -----> Community politicization

What area do you plan to work on in the next three months? What is your next elegant step?



TAKING ACTION

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Taking Action: Moving from Theory to Practice is a reflection-based section for you to consider key learnings and next steps after participating in the previous toolkit sections.

What learning has resonated most for you in this toolkit?

BASE BUILDING

ORGANIZING THROUGH ACTION

EXERCISE 2:

Consider your starting point. This reflection can be helpful to discuss with a few others you are organizing with.

- Who do you know that is well-connected in your neighborhood, with many social connections and relationships in your community? -----> Building leadership core
- If you went knocking on doors or talking to people in the street, what initial community problem-solving initiatives could you invite folks into? -----> Entry points to action, draws to participation
- What points of struggle can you build towards once assembled into an organized base? -----> Expanding horizons for collective action

What role does your local organizing work play in this historical moment? How does your work relate to other actors in the movement?

For example, this historical moment could refer to late-stage capitalism, rising genocide, climate catastrophe, or local trends you notice in your own landscape in the year that you are reading this toolkit. What about the convergence of these events makes this moment unique for you? And for us?

CHARTING A PATH

REFLECT ON THIS MOMENT

What is the current historical moment that you see us in, locally (in your context), as well as internationally? Why is this moment important?



PEOPLES' ASSEMBLIES BEGIN WITH A REFLECTION

When it comes to group facilitation, those with experience sometimes unintentionally trivialize group facilitation work and forget how these methods become more natural with time. At its core, facilitation is a social skill born from personal experiences.

Beginning with this reflection will point out what feels comfortable, normal, or difficult in your own organizing space. These questions may illuminate your space's internal structure or biases, elements which can be helpful to be aware of in the long run.

- How do you feel in your organizing space? Are you comfortable and at ease?
- How do you feel when you conduct general meetings and strategize with your fellow comrades?
- Do you express yourself freely and feel heard?
- Do you think your other group members express themselves freely and feel heard?

For network maps, is there a particular actor that is well-connected to others?

What is the realm of power that your organizing project is challenging or building?

MAPPING LOCAL POWER

REFLECT ON YOUR POWER MAP

Where is there a concentration of power?
Where are there gaps?

PEOPLES' ASSEMBLIES

REFLECT ON YOUR SKILLSET

What types of facilitation and planning skills does your organizing project need to develop in order to hold the container of the Assembly?



MAPPING LOCAL POWER

REFLECT ON POWER IN YOUR CITY

Mapping Power in Detroit, Michigan (page 64) and Municipalism and the Right (page 76) show us that power can be organized in very different ways, depending on local history and conditions. How is power organized in your city?

Consider the following questions:

- What does constituted power look like in your city?
- What or who defines its power and the limitations on its power?
- How can you challenge the limits?
- What are some sources of constituent power?



How can you build these skills? What are some explicit steps you can take together to grow your collective skills?

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PEOPLES' ASSEMBLIES

REFLECT ON LINEAGES AND LEGACIES

Are there assembly traditions in your local or regional history? Are there local indigenous groups, maroon communities, or religious groups that have organized governance models in your region whether historical or contemporary? How can these traditions inform your practice?

Considering examples from the more recent past, what can you learn from assembly experiences of movements like Black Lives Matter, Occupy Wall Street, or other 21st century movements within your community?