

Practical peacebuilding:

a handbook for community organisers

Lessons from East African peace activists



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I'm very conscious of the fact that you can't do it alone.
It's teamwork. When you do it alone you run the risk that
when you are no longer there nobody else will do it.

Wangari Maathai, Kenyan environmental and
peace rights activist and Nobel Peace Prize winner

About this booklet

The authors of this handbook are a network of peacebuilders and community organisers from Rwanda, Kenya and Burundi, assisted by Tobias Wellner, who proposed its creation and put it together.

Many manuals and reports about peacebuilding in African countries come from outside of our communities. We wanted to write directly from our experiences as grassroots peace campaigners. We want to share our approach with other peacebuilders who face similar challenges. We want to celebrate the power of community organising and make it easy for others to join in. We know that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach. Each campaign strategy and all peace work needs to be uniquely designed to fit the local context and owned by the local communities. We want to help peacebuilders across the world receive the benefit of the lessons we have learned along the way.

Many of us have worked as peacebuilders for over a decade, and together we have all supported hundreds of successful campaigns and solved violent conflicts.

We work together on a nonviolence training and accompaniment programme called Turning the Tide East Africa. Through this programme we:

- train local grassroots groups in nonviolent campaigning
- support trained groups in carrying out root-cause analysis, helping communities understand the issues they think affect them most
- work with grassroots groups to carry out the nonviolent campaigns they choose to work on

- help groups to network with others in order to build support and to share skills
- support mediation processes between conflict parties and strengthen inter-community dialogue.

All of our work is underpinned by our seven principles of nonviolence:

- Being willing to take action for justice without giving in to or mimicking violence.
- Respect and care for everyone involved in a conflict, including your opponent.
- Refuse to harm, damage or degrade people/living things/the earth as a means of achieving your goals.
- Act in ways consistent with the ends you seek.
- Be prepared to take suffering on ourselves without inflicting it on others.
- Believe that everyone is capable of change and that no-one has a monopoly on the truth.
- Recognise the importance of training and practice so that nonviolence thinking and behaviour become part of our everyday lives.

Turning the Tide East Africa is implemented in Kenya by the Africa Center for Nonviolence and Sustainable Impact (**AfriNov**), in Rwanda by the Evangelical Friends Church of Rwanda (**EEAR**), and in Burundi by the local organisation Ministry for Peace and Reconciliation under the Cross (**MIPAREC**). Each of these organisations receives help from **Quakers in Britain** in the form of financial, programme and administrative support.

Our staff are trained in nonviolent campaigning and other peacebuilding skills, including trauma healing, conflict mediation, psycho-social support, and peace education. We use our vast shared experiences to support groups to bring the change in the communities that they want to see.

We use a large variety of approaches to solve root causes of violence in its different forms, including training, mediation, conflict

management, public mobilisation, and lobbying, but sometimes also nonviolent public confrontation. We believe that change is best achieved by a mix of traditional peacebuilding approaches and nonviolent campaign action approaches.

We want to share with you what we have learned over the years and encourage you to share this document with others. If you do, please make sure you credit its hardworking creators.

Below you will find a contents page with 17 different questions about our peacebuilding work.

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1

What to do when bringing people together to work for change

Bringing people together to create and empower change is our core task. This is not always easy. Contexts may vary, but one thing is universal: teamwork. Here is a list of key things you should consider before you begin organising for change:

Is my support needed and welcome?

Before starting to think about strategies of how to bring people together, it is really important that you consider if people want your help. Do people want my/our support? Have they asked for my/our support? If they have asked for support, can I/we provide it or are others better placed to offer support? Would my/our intervention be potentially harmful?

Know what you want to achieve and why

Who are you and why are you the one(s) bringing people together for change? What is your motivation? It is important to know the answers to these questions because you or your organisation will engage with the context you work in. You will need to be able to clearly communicate this so people understand who you are and what you want.

If you bring people together for change, you need to have a good idea of what change you want to bring. At what level are you trying to bring change: locally, regionally, nationally, or all of the above?

Know the people you want to bring together for change

Before you bring people together, you need to understand them: What is their history? What are their fears and what are their strengths? In what context do they operate?

Though many people may be aware that they are being oppressed – by governance structures, cultural norms, etc. – they often feel powerless to speak out. People are often afraid to speak out as they think they operate in isolation. The only way to bring these people together is to make them realise their isolation is contributing to the very existence of the problem they are facing.

Some groups or people are afraid to speak out as they might have witnessed the violence or oppression of others who spoke out in the past. They fear that if they speak out, something similar might happen

to them. You need to be aware of these fears, and to respect and engage with them.

Groups might have expectations that a third party or organisation will solve their problems. What are these expectations and in what form can help be given?

Organise training in nonviolent change

You can offer training in nonviolence so that people have the necessary knowledge to engage with change.

During the training, let people know more of their ability and strength that can be of value in driving the change they want to see.

Provide inspiring examples.

Make sure you offer time for participants to ask questions about nonviolence.

If you want to learn how to carry out training in nonviolent campaigning, please get in touch with us. We've carried out hundreds of them and learned a lot about how best to do them.

Get people to analyse together

Help people come together to discuss their situation and let them think who else might be affected by the violence/injustices they are facing.

Support the group in discussing and understanding the problem. This also helps them to create a common understanding.

Get the group to identify possible changes they are comfortable with and how this change could be achieved.


Guide the trained group to take up a priority issue and identify the allies to work with in the campaign.

Support community-led campaigns

Identify contact persons for the group in order to support with organising any further activities.

As the campaign process begins, support the group as they take the lead in their campaign. Emphasise the ownership of the issue by the community.

Continue to check in with them, help to connect them with others,



encourage them, help them with further training if possible and necessary.

Help the group develop an action plan, stating what will be done, when, where, who will do what, what resources are needed and how they will get the resources.

Not every group member will continue until the end; focus most of your support on the key people with the most energy. However, be mindful of the group dynamics (see more on this below).

Just in case the initial plan fails, what will happen? Help the group to come up with a 'plan B'. In TTT East Africa we say, "the plan is to change the plan."


Remind the group of the **seven TTT principles of nonviolence**.

2

Twelve things to consider when supporting peace activists

Turning the Tide East Africa supports grassroots groups and activists to carry out campaigns they choose to work on. Here are 12 things we think are important when working with community activists:

1. Understand the activists' needs by engaging with them in an honest conversation.
2. Ensure you explain well what support you and your organisation can offer. For TTT East Africa that is:
 - training in nonviolent campaigning
 - support with research and analysis
 - campaign strategy advice
 - mentoring and moral support
 - networking opportunities with other organisations and campaigners
 - small stipends for travel and food during campaigning or for campaign material.
3. Find a common understanding of how you and the group will work together.
4. Offer training in group dynamics and teamwork. Encourage activists to work as a group in which each member is valued for their skills. Help the group in setting up strong communication methods.
5. Ensure that activists can contact you or your colleagues. Stay in touch!
6. Emphasise that the activists are the ones who own the community campaign and that they are role models for the community.
7. Encourage activists to set SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely) campaign goals.
8. Support activists in identifying risk and offer them help in mitigating risk. If possible, ensure that activists set aside resources to mitigate risks.

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9. Encourage campaigners to connect with subject matter experts. In the event of dangerous situations, links with protection agencies, lawyers or psycho-social counsellors can become very important.
 10. Make sure that you can debrief and evaluate with the activists.
 14. Share inspiring success stories to encourage campaigners in times of low energy.
 12. Remember that moral support from you can be a really powerful form of support. Make sure you ask activists about their feelings, especially after they have taken action.

3

How to bring two groups together that see each other as enemies

Bringing conflicting groups together is delicate work. How you approach this will very much depend on what groups you are working with, or why they are in conflict. However, there are some basic things to keep in mind when you are trying to bring together two groups that usually see each other as opponents, or even as 'enemies'.

Set your role and your goal

Before you start, be clear what your role is and why you are trying to bring these two groups together. The goal should be to change the quality of interaction that takes place between the two groups, and you should focus on rebuilding a relationship.

Are you neutral in their conflict? If not, how will this impact your work? Will they trust you as an intermediary and will you be able to treat them with equal respect?

Getting to know the situation

Understand the conflict well. You can do this through research or by talking to the different groups.

Speak to the two groups separately in order to understand the issue or conflict.

Capture each group's feelings and unmet needs that contribute to the conflict. What do they need?

Make sure you understand the underlying reasons for the conflict.

Preparing the engagement

Find out if the two groups are willing to meet and how they think that could be possible. Do they need to send representatives? Do they need someone neutral to facilitate and, if so, who will they trust? Will they trust you if you see yourselves in that role? Where do they want to meet and in what setting? How long should it take?

Develop an idea of where and how the two groups could meet. Both parties need to feel comfortable with this.

Ensure transparency. Both parties should know what is happening, so make sure this is clearly communicated.

Support the process

As a supporter of this process, try to set constructive rules and a good environment for the engagement. Make sure that the groups agree not to use threatening or hurtful language.

Prepare a good opening statement that sets out and explains your role and the idea behind the process.

Ask if the groups are comfortable with people taking notes of the discussions.

Your communication skills will be very important here in order to get messages across clearly. Make sure you watch out for the body language of the participants. Sometimes this can tell you more than the words that are used.

Let people talk about the issues affecting them, but ensure the discussion is within the context of the issues. Make sure people adhere to ground rules. If necessary, interrupt if anything is going against the rules or the conversation becomes too confrontational.

As a facilitator of the process, at different times you will need to ask open questions, offer space for reflection, check in with participants, use intentional silence, or summarise what was said or agreed.

Do not offer solutions. Allow the groups to talk through possible solutions and make commitments to them. Your role is simply to facilitate the process.

Follow-up

After the initial conversation, share your notes (as long as the groups have agreed that you can take notes).

Speak to the groups and find out if follow-up meetings are wanted and necessary.

If the groups want to continue their dialogue, try to find a space for this to happen. This could be in a meeting, but it could also be through a shared activity, such as a sports event or community project.



Decision-making

The goals and tasks of decision-making are to:

- make sure all issues have been covered
- help the groups develop the final terms of a settlement
- check in with all parties regarding the terms and language used in any written agreement – the agreement should be clear, positive and balanced
- make sure you thank all parties for participating.

Story – Youth of opposing political parties in Burundi working together

In Burundi, young people who support political parties often view other political young people as enemies. This rivalry can often lead to hate speech, violent confrontations and killings.

In the area of Bisinde, Turning the Tide Burundi supported a local group of peace activists that decided to intervene in rising local tensions around this issue. The first step was to train a local community group in nonviolent campaigning. With their new skills, the team invited youth from different parties, representatives from local authorities and other local leaders to come together and learn about the results of different forms of violence.

After several smaller meetings, the campaign team organised a large community gathering, during which campaigners used poems and dances to raise awareness of politically motivated violence. Members of the community were able to speak out in a safe space, and Turning the Tide

Burundi shared their principles of nonviolence with the community. It was an important time to speak about the impact of political violence in the community.

Soon after this event, community members began to report initial successes in the campaign: the opposition party was able to open an office in the community without being harmed by others. The campaigners organised follow-up meetings with the two groups in order to continue a dialogue. It took some time, but community members reported to Turning the Tide Burundi that hate speech stopped. The campaigners wanted to make sure that the two groups continued to work together. They managed to convince the local cooperative to accept every young person, not just the youth who supported the ruling party.

During the highly contested elections in 2020, there were no reports of violence in the area. Community members attributed this to the work of the campaign and to the spaces it created for continued dialogue. Members of the different parties are now working together on different community tasks.

4

How to ensure community ownership of a campaign or project

Turning the Tide East Africa does not tell community groups what violence or issues they should work on. Instead, we help community groups to identify and analyse violence. We then support them in carrying out the actions that are needed to bring social justice.

For peacebuilding to work, it is essential that the community owns the issues and their solutions. Here are a few things you can do to help the community own a campaign or a development project.

Community ownership will increase sustainability

A campaign or project that aims to bring sustainable results needs to have a strong base in the community. The people affected should feel the issue and support the campaign.

Your role as an 'outsider': help identify, analyse and provide technical support

Offer training in nonviolence to make people aware of their powers.

It is for the community members to identify the issue that the campaign or project then seeks to address. Make sure that the community plays an active part in the group's analysis, while you provide technical advice only.


Offer room for creativity. Community members are experts in their own local context and have the power to find creative solutions to complex issues.

Understand how the issue is affecting the community. Let the community group assess the issues' impact on them and list them in order of priority.

Guide the group to come up with strategies to address the issue by identifying all of the people involved. If people are part of the solution-finding process, they are more likely to support the change.

As Benson from TTT Kenya puts it,

“People will easily own what they have contributed to, as opposed to being spoon-fed the entire campaign. They are most likely to be willing to safeguard their sweat.”



Offer a session on teambuilding and let people assign each other responsibilities. Help to find a role for everybody.

Apply elicited questions to harvest more ideas and information that would lead the group to their campaign goal.

Successes and failures should be owned by everyone equally to provide enough space to re-strategise.

Most importantly, let the community lead while you support wherever you are needed and wished for.

Walter from Kenya summarises:

“Always think of the community as the owner of the problem and as the only people with a solution to the problem.”

5

How to manage groups that have high expectations

Our peacebuilding network trains and works mostly with small, existing grassroots organisations. This can be challenging as organisations have their own objectives, perceptions and expectations. Here are some of the things you should keep in mind when engaging with such organisations to create win-win collaborations for change.

Think about how you are perceived by the group/organisation

In our East African context, people working for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are often viewed by community members as being rich and having their own interests.

Groups know from experience that many NGOs are only present for short-term projects and then disappear again. It is a common perception that NGOs are donors with a lot of money to give out to groups and people. Some grassroots organisations have collaborated unsuccessfully with NGOs in the past and might be hesitant to engage with them again.

If you work for an NGO, you need to be aware of this history and be very clear with groups about your organisation's goals.

Speak openly about expectations


Make sure you understand the group well by learning about their policies, objectives, missions, and visions.

Make it very clear to the group that you are trying to work with groups' objectives, and that you do not intend to define their objectives for them.

Find out what the group is expecting from you.

Communicate your position to the group by responding to each expectation listed. Where you cannot meet their expectation, be transparent and let the group know why you cannot meet their expectation.

Make sure the group understands the core mandate of your organisation.



At the beginning of your collaboration, agree with the group how and when your collaboration will end.

Keep revisiting expectations to note gaps and progress.

Encourage the group's power

Remind the group of their power and that they have come together to reach a goal together.

Maintain healthy relations by helping the group understand what success is.

Encourage the group to always strengthen their team spirit.

6

How to deal with conflict within a campaign group

Conflicts are a normal part of life. In fact, we find that conflicts help us to progress, but only if they are handled in a constructive, nonviolent way.

Social justice campaigners are often exposed to a lot of stress during their difficult work. This means that conflict can also erupt within groups that are working to bring positive change. Here are some things to consider to prevent conflict from disrupting the success of a campaign.

Understand that conflict within campaign groups can arise for different reasons. This might help you anticipate some challenges. Common reasons for conflict in campaign groups include:


- different ideas about campaign goals
- competition over leadership
- competition over resources
- individual versus group interests
- poor or lack of leadership.

Support groups with training exercises on team working. In some campaigns, one activist's interest might go against the interest of the group. You could help the group by starting an open discussion about this.

Encourage group members to discover their own interests in the campaign. Will they hinder or encounter the group's plans, and if so, is this a bad thing?

It is important to **speak about expectations**. Not all group members will remain active throughout the campaign. Some people might not be able to continue with their activism. Different people will have different expectations of your work; talking about those expectations will help avoid disappointment and potential conflict.

Develop a **common understanding of the campaign**. The group should own the change they anticipate. If a conflict erupts within the group, you can help by starting a discussion on how this conflict impacts the group's campaign.



Identifying roles: Who is good at what? Does the group need a leader, and if so, who would be best for this role? Are there alternative decision-making processes that could be more effective?

Encourage regular meetings to **build team spirit** and to share experiences and challenges.

Be transparent about the group's resources and how they will be used.

As a supporter of the group, follow up with them and encourage their team spirit.

Help the group deal with any issues as soon as they arise. Do this before they escalate into a conflict that might hinder their activism.

7 What to remember when working with young people

In East Africa 20 per cent of people are aged between 15 and 24*. In our experience, young people are key allies and drivers for change.

Daniel, Turning the Tide National Coordinator in Rwanda, says:

“Big social justice campaigns are not possible in Rwanda without the support of young people. They are powerful allies because they are a tremendous source of creativity and are not afraid to speak out.”

Here are a few things we think you should consider when working with young people on nonviolent campaigning:

Listen, learn, and include

Recognise the force of youth as agents of change and peacebuilding.

Create platforms and opportunities where you can listen to their concerns and learn about their ideas.

Strengthen their participation in the community as well as in regional and national decision-making processes.

Ensure that your programme pays attention to key areas of their concerns.

Learn their language during conversation; many young people use language you might not be familiar with.

Always appreciate their efforts.

Train and support their activities

Support young people with training in nonviolence.

Engage them in a meaningful purpose and encourage their innovative actions.

Bring yourself to their level during any activity. You are not superior to them, so do not adopt an ‘I know it all’ mentality when working with them.

Create a youth-friendly environment and engage the youth in brainstorming solutions. This will enable them not only to own the

* <https://tinyurl.com/EA-RAYD>

process but also to actively participate in the process of finding solutions.

Include activities that could help them interact and engage freely, and with creativity.

Give them positive affirmations in the process as this will encourage them to actively engage with great results.

Follow up with them as you try to put their ideas into practice where possible. Let them know if any of their ideas are not possible and explain why. Provide them with suggestions of what could work best.

For children and youth in schools

Remember that children and young adults are vulnerable and require special care and treatment. Make sure that you engage with their custodians, such as parents, teachers, religious organisations and other institutions.

Facilitate training sessions for the people who take care of children so that they can help engage children in a safe and meaningful way.

Organise children into smaller units and train them on the programme objectives. You can even help them form clubs related to your programme, if that's what they want to do.

Closely coordinate and monitor the progress of the activities the young people are engaged in, in order to avoid any misuse, abuse or excesses in the process. Make sure that proper child safeguarding rules are in place.

Story – Rwanda’s youth peace clubs

Rwandan Quakers have long recognised the power of young people in bringing about social change. The Turning the Tide Rwanda team noticed that it was often young people who would drive social change, so they started carrying out training specifically for young people.

It soon became clear that young people needed other training approaches, but that they were also very fearless when it came to speaking out against injustice. Realising their power, more and more young people began to ask for training.

So far, Turning the Tide Rwanda has trained 18 youth groups. Most of the time, the young people decide to form peace clubs after the training to stay connected, but also as a forum to work together for social justice. The team helped to set up 15 youth peace clubs across Rwanda with a membership of more than 350 young people.

These clubs are led by young people who organise nonviolent campaigns against corrupt local leaders or against sexual violence towards young women. They also help other groups by providing creative elements within campaigns, using song, dance, poetry or other forms of art to make themselves heard.

8

How to manage risk in community campaigns

Sometimes, the campaigns we support go against powerful people or deal with very difficult community issues. Our work does not always make everybody happy. But in everything we do, we remain nonviolent while recognising that everyone is capable of change.

If you are working on a risky campaign, here are some things you can do to maintain safety for everyone.

Description of risk	Probability – how likely is this risk to occur? (This will help the group to prioritise different risks.)	Severity – if the risk occurs, how badly will it impact the campaign?	Mitigation – what can the group do to minimise the risk?
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Help campaigners understand what risks their work might bring. You could ask them to compose a risk matrix together, which could look like:

Who are the relevant authorities or organisations the campaigners can reach out to in order to get support in risky situations?

Make sure you have the contact details of relevant authorities. Ideally, build a relationship with them so they know who you are.

Ensure that the campaign is based on factual, well researched information.


Ensure that the campaign's strategies are nonviolent and do not breach constitutional rights.

If one team member is particularly at risk, consider assigning that person a background role. Work as a team to distribute risk.

Encourage campaigners to work as a team on any given campaign issue. Avoid working alone or in isolation.

If something unexpectedly bad happens:

- ask campaigners if they feel safe to report it to the authorities
- if the campaigners agree to this, let other partner organisations or



team members know so that they are informed and can provide support

- contact human rights organisations and seek legal support
- seek refuge from the area if you or the group you support feel unsafe.

9

What to consider when planning a protest

Many people in East Africa are reluctant to stage protests because they fear they will be arrested, injured or even killed. And rightly so – there are plenty of examples of this happening. These protests and demonstrations often turn violent, either because the security forces react violently or because some protestors use violence to make themselves heard. Sometimes, both of these things happen.

Nevertheless, staging a peaceful protest, demonstration or march remains a powerful campaign tactic, if planned carefully. Here are some things you should consider:

What is the goal of the protest?

Before the protest starts and people gather, make sure the group is clear about its goal. Explain to participants why they are using this tactic. Make sure the key message of the protest is clear. Find out what they want to achieve?

If a protest is not planned or carried out properly, it could put people at risk, so make sure you have explored all other tactics first.

As Betty from TTT Kenya puts it,

“Peaceful protests, demonstrations or marches are often the last resort in East African campaigning.”

Inform authorities

Make sure that authorities and your allies are formally notified of the protest well in advance. In many areas it could be very dangerous to gather a large number of people without informing the police or military.

Maintain nonviolence

Remind the group that maintaining nonviolence is really important during a protest. Share the Turning the Tide principle that says, ‘Act in ways consistent with the ends you seek.’

If you think violence is inevitable, try to halt the protest and encourage a change of tactics.

Preparing for the protest

Ensure that the group maps out all of the actors opposed to the campaign.

Make sure that risks are discussed before the protest and ensure you have a risk management plan.

Make sure that participants know their legal rights during the protest.

Make sure that each participant understands nonviolent discipline. Also, encourage them to think about how they will react when confronted by their opponents and/or the police.

Will the group be able to control any protestors who might join them but who may not understand nonviolent approaches? You should encourage the group to avoid any activity that would undermine the principles of nonviolence.

Ask the group to think about who the protest is targeting.

What are the key messages and how are you going to communicate them during the protest? Consider things like songs, banners and placards.

Does the group have enough resources to organise and hold the protest?

Develop specific roles for key people: Who will ensure that nonviolence is adhered to? Who will speak to the press? Who will ensure the safety of protestors? Who will speak to the authorities?

Make sure you speak to the appropriate authorities in order not to compromise the protest.

Plan B

“The plan is to change the plan.” Make sure that the group questions its plans if the context changes. Participants should be willing to call off the protest at any stage if they discover any possible violence.

10

How to form alliances with leaders and power-holders

Most community campaigners will need to involve local leaders or other power-holders in their campaigns. For example, a local leader may grant – or block – a large community gathering on domestic violence. Here are a few things we have found to be important when building alliances with local leaders and power-holders:

Do your research

Analyse who holds the power in your campaign. Which leader or power-holder do you need to involve? How might this leader perceive you and your campaign or project? Will they be friendly to your cause or will you have to convince them? What exactly do you need their support for?

Set up a meeting

Try to arrange a face-to-face meeting with the power-holder. If you struggle to get an appointment, try finding an ally close to the leader you want to speak to. This could be a friend or an assistant. Make sure they understand the issue you are trying to address, and try to win them over so that they can help you in setting up a meeting with the power-holder.

Before the meeting

Preparing for the meeting with the leader is very important. Make sure that you can present your case well, with solid information and testimonies.


Make sure you know exactly what you want/need from the power-holder.

To avoid being late for the meeting, arrive 10–15 minutes before it starts.

During the meeting

Introduce yourself and anyone with you. Who are you? What work do you do and with what organisation (if any)? Briefly state your reasons for coming.

Explain the issue/s you are trying to address. Present your well researched case. Don't judge or put blame on anyone.



Ask them for their opinion on the issue. Listen carefully to what they say and ask questions if you need to clarify anything.

If they are unaware of the issues you are raising, invite them to respond to your story and to say how they feel about it. If present, other members of your group can share how they feel or how the issue is affecting people.

Be clear about how they can support you. Suggest possible interventions and request their specific support for those interventions.

Allow them time to respond. If they tell you to come back later, show flexibility.

Stay in touch

Stay in touch after your meeting. Share your challenges and successes in a phonecall or another meeting.

Story – Building partnerships for peace in Kisumu

In Kisumu in Kenya, the Covid-19 pandemic led to a stark rise in police violence. Police would often use excessive force to implement Covid-19 restrictions. Even before the pandemic started, relations between the community and the police were difficult.

The local group Disability Agenda Kenya (DAK) asked Turning the Tide Kenya to help them address this. DAK found that most violent conflicts erupted between motor-taxi drivers and the police. The police often arrested drivers for Covid-related violations. The drivers saw this as unjust. Police action would often be met with violent retaliation from the drivers, making the situation worse.

DAK campaigners met with the drivers to talk about the issue and decided to launch their 'Don't arrest, give mask' campaign. The goal was to stop the police from

arresting people working in the informal sector for not wearing facemasks. DAK explicitly included the police in their campaign. After all, the police officers are also members of the community, with their own issues and constraints.

When the campaigners met with the police, they explained that the community would see them as the ones causing the problem. Regardless if that was true, the police would need to keep that mind when engaging with the community. Together with Turning the Tide Kenya's support, DAK managed to convince both parties to agree on solutions that worked for all. Since the campaign, violence between the two parties has stopped and there has been a visible improvement in the relationship between the police and the community. What made this campaign successful was that the campaigners convinced the motor-taxi drivers to work together with the police instead of continuing to work against each other.

11

How to persuade leaders and power-holders to act

If the local leader or power-holder is your campaign target – someone you are demanding change from – you need to approach them differently from your allies.

Research

Make sure that the objective of your campaign is very clear in order to avoid confusion.

Analyse who holds the power. Which local leader or power-holder/s is involved in your campaign issue? Make sure you understand how and why the power-holder is involved.

Analyse the possible risks faced by campaigners in engaging these people. Come up with mitigation measures.

Find allies who can support your work.

Set up a meeting

If it is sensible within your campaign strategy, arrange a face-to-face meeting with the power-holder. In most cases, this requires persistence as they are unlikely to accept your request for a meeting.

If you struggle to get an appointment, try finding an ally close to the leader you want to speak to. This could be a friend or an assistant. Make sure they understand the issue you are trying to address, and try to win them over so that they can help you in setting up a meeting with the power-holder.

Before the meeting

Preparing for the meeting is key. Make sure that you present your case well, with well-researched information and testimonies.

Make sure you know exactly what you want/need from the power-holder.

To avoid being late for the meeting, arrive 10–15 minutes before it starts. If you are late, make sure you apologise!

Only carry copies of any evidence; keep the originals safe.

During the meeting

Remember the Turning the Tide principle of nonviolence that says:

‘Respect and care for everyone involved in a conflict, including your opponent.’ Maintain the nonviolent principles throughout your engagement.

Introduce yourself and anyone with you. Who are you? What work do you do and with what organisation (if any)? Briefly state your reasons for coming.

Explain the issue/s you are trying to address. Present your well researched case. If possible, share statistics that help to illustrate the injustice. Be prepared to share any evidence to prove your case.

Ask them for their opinion on the issue. Listen carefully to what they say and ask questions if you need to clarify anything.

If they are unaware of the issues you are raising, invite them to respond to your story and to say how they feel about it. If present, other members of your group can share how they feel or how the issue is affecting people.

Propose the action you would like the leader to take. If they agree to it, ensure that you establish a timeline to help you monitor progress.

Plan B

If the meeting fails to take place, adopt a plan B. This could include going to the next leader higher up or engaging with the media to share your frustration that you weren’t able to meet your adversary. You could also stage a nonviolent direct action at this point, like a peaceful march or engaging the courts.

“The plan is to change the plan.” This is a key component of our work. It does not mean that you shouldn’t have a plan, but that you need to be prepared to change it!

Story – Nairobi youth march to demand jobs

In Nairobi, the Turning the Tide Kenya team trained a youth group in nonviolent campaigning. During the training, the young campaigners identified that one of the core issues in their community was youth unemployment. They knew that the local government had employment opportunities available, but government officials were not making the information accessible to young people.

After analysing the causes of this issue, the youth group decided to start a campaign demanding accessible information for employment opportunities. The young campaigners also wanted to inform the youth of the available opportunities.

They gathered all the necessary information and found an ally in the local ministry of youth affairs,

which supported their cause. The group planned a march in the community to put pressure on government officials, but also to encourage other youths to demand support. Turning the Tide Kenya helped them plan the action, advising youth on how to keep the march nonviolent and how to act if intruders disturbed their peaceful action.

Using songs and dances, carrying banners, leaflets and messages demanding youth opportunities, the campaigners marched through the community and attracted a lot of attention. The march achieved its aim: advertisements for job opportunities became publicly accessible. Some of the community's unemployed youth were able to get government-supported jobs. The youth group felt empowered by this experience and continues to be very active.

12

Ways to build a movement for peace

What do we mean by 'movement'?

There are many different approaches to and definitions of this term. Turning the Tide East Africa understands a 'movement' as a network of groups or organisations that are actively working together to achieve a common goal.

We believe that building a movement does not mean it has to be large or internationally known. Movements can, and sometimes should, remain small.

We think it is most important that movements are effective and serve their purpose. We have often worked with powerful local and regional movements that have made a real difference. Movements, regardless of their size, can be incredibly effective at bringing about social justice. Here are a few considerations we have learned over the years:

We think movements work best when their members...

- share the same or a similar understanding of an issue, conflict or topic
- share the same or very similar goals
- critically assess what they bring to the movement. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each movement member? This can help to identify learning opportunities and potential for collaborations.

Meet and get to know each other

Arrange exchange visits between members of different movements. During these visits, members learn from each other, understand each other's contexts, share experiences and, most of all, get to know each other. This helps to build better relationships and therefore more effective movements.

Organise gatherings where several members can come together to discuss an issue and share challenges and experiences. This can also be a safe space in which to think about and agree on future strategies.

Gatherings and exchange visits can help to create new common goals and exchange ideas and skills. Most importantly, these activities can really help to build a positive and supportive community.



Let the groups decide how they want to work together

Movements are most effective when their members decide for themselves how they should work together. For example, should the movement be a legal entity or a loose network?

In the process of building a movement, frequent conversations about common goals and strategies are really important. This enables members to identify with the movement and feel heard.

Most importantly, building an effective movement takes time and there is no one-size-fits-all recipe.

13

Benefits and risks of working on a campaign with another organisation

Turning the Tide East Africa helps small grassroots groups carry out successful social justice campaigns. These campaigns often take place in collaboration with other organisations. What are the benefits and risks of these collaborations?

Possible benefits of working with other organisations

It will help you pool resources.

Your pool of expertise expands. You can share and use the technical knowledge of others.

It might help you to intensify the pressure of the campaign because more people are involved.

You will have greater coverage as your partner organisation will also be able to mobilise support.

Your partner organisation might be trusted by people or organisations your group does not normally engage with. This increases your access to them.

Possible risks of working with other organisations

The messages your partner puts out during the campaign might be coded and contrary to your principles. You may only realise this later on in the campaign.

If your partner organisation gets bad publicity, you might also be affected because people know that you work together.

You may have a different understanding of nonviolence. Before collaborating, arrange a meeting to build a common understanding.

Difficulties between partners may arise due to conflicts over ownership of resources, successes, failures, pictures, credits or awards. This is especially a risk if one organisation is larger than the other.

Be mindful that there is an increased risk if your partner is a political party or is very close to a political party.

14

How to assess the effectiveness of grassroots campaigns?

We believe that our main role is to support grassroots community groups. Our goal is for groups to own their campaigns. After training groups, we support them in achieving what they themselves set out to do. We call this 'community ownership'. Here are a few things we do to assess whether we are effective:

Planning and setting up goals with groups

In our work, we spend a lot of time planning because we believe that a good plan will increase the commitment of group members to their work.

At the beginning of our engagement with groups – often at the end of our trainings – we help them to develop clear goals. These goals are key indicators for whether we and the groups are achieving what we set out to do.

Community ownership measures

We have different ways to measure if the groups' goals are being met:

- We listen to testimonies from individuals about how they have changed their attitudes, behaviour or actions because of their engagement with our programme.
- We monitor the groups' nonviolent campaigns and listen to community members, authorities and the groups themselves about changes in the community that resulted from their campaign work.
- We observe how the groups act. Here are a few indicators that help us to understand if we are doing a good job:
 - group members are engaged in their campaigns
 - groups identify challenges independently and reach out for advice and support
 - groups find ways to start and resource their actions independently
 - people or organisations being held accountable begin to respond to the issue raised by campaigners

- groups receive recognition from their community, authorities or other groups
- group members speak with passion and pride about their campaigns
- other groups reach out to us, saying they have been referred to us by a group we work with.

How we gather the necessary information

Staff members from Turning the Tide East Africa are present at campaign events or activities. This allows us to speak directly to community members who are affected or targeted by the campaigns. This helps us to understand how the campaigners are doing.

We are present at follow-up meetings with campaigners. We speak to groups about their progress and review the objectives they have set for themselves.

We also receive activity reports from groups. These might be written accounts or verbal updates over the phone.

We frequently speak to groups about how we work together and how we can be better at what we do.

15

How to fund small community campaigns

Our network of peacebuilders supports grassroots organisations with running social justice campaigns. Carrying out these campaigns is not always easy because money is often needed to run them.

Campaigners may need small amounts of money to afford to travel around. Money is needed to pay for loudspeakers during a public rally. A group needs to pay hall rent fees.

Though people put their hearts and souls into these campaigns, many cannot afford any extra expenditure. Turning the Tide East Africa tries to provide small amounts of money to make these social justice campaigns possible. But if little or no money is available, here are some options to consider before you start campaigning.

What resources are needed?

Help the campaign group to think about what parts of their campaign will cost money. Help the group to make realistic plans.

Make sure the community group really owns the issue

If the group is convinced that their campaign will be of benefit to the community, they are much more likely to find resources for the campaign.

What resources does the group have?

What does the group really need money for? Are there ways to get around costs by asking for favours from allies?

Can the group use locally made materials for their campaigning?

What can the campaign group and the campaigners afford? How are they willing to contribute?

Identify allies for resources

Encourage the group to find out if local authorities have public resources available to support its work. Most groups have explored this in the past and have received some funds to boost their projects.

Are there other groups or organisations they can work with? Come up with a plan to reach out to them, but be cautious of this process. Your opponents might hear about this and take advantage.



Accountability

Encourage the group to put accountability measures in place to record what was spent, on what and by whom. Encourage them to keep receipts. If the group’s finances are transparent, it is more likely to be able to collaborate with other partners in the future.

It is important to build the capacity of the group in this area.

16

How to help a group towards independence

Turning the Tide East Africa usually trains established groups, but we sometimes help to build new groups. We provide training and support for analysis, campaigning and networking. Our resources are limited, so eventually we will need to let groups go in order to help others. How do we do this in a way that remains supportive to the campaign group?

When to stop working with groups

The group you have supported appears to be strong enough to continue working by itself. The group only reaches out to you for very specific reasons and tells you about its successes. If this is the case, great! But here are some things to consider:

- Evaluate your partnership objectives to ensure you have achieved everything you set out to achieve.
- Make sure you have a strategy for disengaging. Ideally, this should be time-limited, and both parties should accept it.
- Make sure the group feels like it can continue to reach out to you.
- Encourage the group to share its successes with you.
- Ask the group to invite you to its events in the future.
- Make sure you stay in touch with the group to see how it is faring.

A group of campaigners might start out with a lot of energy. But this energy can soon fade away if the group loses interest in pursuing its goals, if members are overwhelmed by challenges, or if the group is so divided that you cannot help them anymore. Here is what you should consider:

- Contact the group to try to find out what challenges made them become inactive.
- Offer your support, but make sure you also have certain expectations.
- Let the group know that you appreciate them and what they have been able to achieve.
- Make clear if you plan to no longer engage them and explain why.

Story – Planting the seeds for a mass organisation in Kenya

In 2014 some members of Muranda Aids Care and Education Program (MACPE), a local health advocacy organisation in Western Kenya, participated in a basic three-day Turning the Tide training. During the training participants were asked to discuss the most pressing issues in their communities.

Members of MACPE recognised that meeting the cost of funerals was placing a burden on many families in the region. In some cases, families were having to sell land and possessions to meet funeral costs, causing particular stress for poorer community members. The group saw an opportunity to build community solidarity by responding to the problem with concrete action and in a way that would bring people from different tribal communities together.

With support from Turning the Tide Kenya, members of MACPE formed a cooperative called Tuinuane. From its initial focus on supporting

members with funeral costs, the organisation broadened its scope. Tuinuane now also works to reduce violence in communities, offering support services to vulnerable people, meeting health care or education costs, and building homes. Members of Tuinuane have built over 300 houses for vulnerable community members.

These acts of concrete solidarity at a time of bereavement, coupled with the focus on working across ethnic and tribal lines, meant that the organisation grew rapidly. By mid-2018, Tuinuane had over 50,000 members.

At the initial stages we accompanied the members of MACPE to set up Tuinuane. Later, our team also helped Tuinuane with their community initiatives to ensure they adhered to nonviolence approaches. With training, continued support and advice, we successfully planted the seeds for a mass organisation. By 2018, Tuinuane and Turning the Tide Kenya both felt that the organisation had outgrown the need to receive advice from us.

17

How international partners can best support grassroots peace work

Providing financial support is of course a very important way in which national and international groups and organisations can support grassroots peace work. But it is not the only way for people and organisations to show solidarity with this work. Here are some more ideas:

Share our success stories, so that others can learn from our experience and expertise.

Offer platforms for us to speak about our work. This will help us to grow and make new connections.

Offer opportunities for skill development. Share with us opportunities to participate in courses related to our work. This could be training, conferences, gatherings or other meetings.

Offer expertise and technical support, for example in story gathering, fundraising or other themed topics close to our work.

Connect us with other organisations.

Use our experience and expertise to influence national and international policy.



Final thoughts

We know that every social justice campaign or peace project is unique. Each one has its own context. But we hope that some of what we've learned will help you in your peace work. If you would like further advice on grassroots peacebuilding, on nonviolence training, or on how to use nonviolent campaigning skills, please reach out to us! We're always interested in building new connections and learning from our interactions with others.

Africa Center for Nonviolence & Sustainable Impact

www.afrinov.org

Ministry for Peace and Reconciliation Under the Cross

www.mipareceng.wordpress.com

Evangelical Friends Church of Rwanda

www.evangelicalfriendschurch.org

Quakers in Britain work in East Africa

www.quaker.org.uk/east-africa



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