

Welcome to “*Long Term Community Organizing, Abridged!*” The goal of this simulation-game is to show the power of relationships in responding to community needs. As the facilitator, you will help a group of people learn about community organizing and practice key skills in a fun way, with just enough competition to keep it interesting. My hope is that playing this game will help people more deeply think about civic life and result in them getting to know each other better. Community organizing is all about relationships!

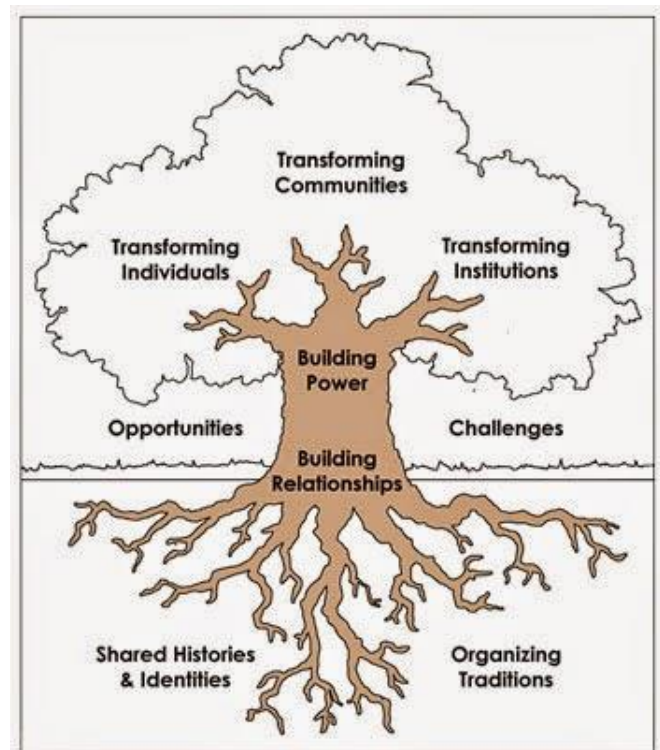
There is a longer introduction further down. The purpose of this sheet (front & back) is to let you know the game requirements and to give you a detailed outline of all the steps involved in this game. Feel free to adapt the rules for your particular group. Just make sure you have read through ALL of the materials before getting started.

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This game was written for the 2017 Civic Games Design Contest.

Game Requirements

- At least 8 people. 10-20 people would be better. There is no hard upper limit.
- A large open room (possibly supplemented with adjacent smaller rooms). People will need to walk around.
- Name tags
- Dice
- Method for deciding which players become organizers. (See below.)
- Copies for each player of: INTRODUCTION & POINTS SHEET, CONDUCTING A ONE-ON-ONE
- Copies for each organizer of: CRISIS GENERATOR, CRISIS NARRATIVE & RESPONSE
- Index Cards (or scrap paper)
- Pens/Pencils
- The total time will likely be between 3 and 3.5 hours. (If you have a regular gathering, like a class, this could easily be broken into multiple parts.)



Gaurav Tripathi <http://socialworkbhu.blogspot.com/2014/02/the-relevance-of-power-in-community.html>

Community organizing is a process where people who live in proximity to each other come together into an organization that acts in their shared self-interest.
(en.wikipedia.org)

Community organizing is characterized by the mobilizing of volunteers. Staff roles are limited to helping volunteers become effective, to guiding the learning of leaders through the process, and to helping create the mechanism for the group to advocate on their own behalf. Community organizing almost always includes confrontation of some sort. [Often when] *people-who-want-something* get themselves together to ask for it, *the-people-who-could-give-them-what-they-want* get jumpy. Community organizing strategies include meeting with corporate or government decision makers to hold them accountable for their actions, designing programs for others (not the group) to implement that meet the needs of the community, and aggressive group action to block negative developments or behaviors (highway construction that leads to neighborhood destruction, etc.).

(<https://comm-org.wisc.edu/papers97/beckwith.htm>, formatting changes mine)

Step-by-Step Outline for Facilitators

1. **INTRODUCTION & POINTS SHEET** (15 minutes): As each participant arrives, give them a name tag and one of these sheets. Ask them to read the introduction, tally their points and hang on to it.
2. **Welcome, Introduction, Explanation.** (10 minutes): Give an overview of the game in your own words.
3. **Relationship Building Through One-on-Ones.** (45 minutes)
 - Note about **locality**: Most community organizing happens within a geographic area no larger than a single city. If your group comes from disparate areas, you may need to agree that everyone will pretend to be from the location you are meeting in, or some other mutually agreed place.
 - a. Explain that: *“A One-on-One is a friendly, informal interview where the interviewer learns some things about the person being interviewed. The most important thing to learn is what the person cares deeply about, what motivates them.”*
 - b. *“In this game, you will only be able to invite people to join your team if you have interviewed them as part of a One-on-One. We are going to divide you up and let you do One-on-Ones with each other. The person doing the interview should record what you learn on your One-on-One record sheet. It takes some effort to find someone to do a One-on-One with; that is part of the game!”*
 - c. Pass out the CONDUCTING A ONE-ON-ONE sheet and give them time to familiarize themselves with it.
 - d. Divide participants into two groups: Ones & Twos.
 - e. Conduct the One-on-Ones. There will be 6 rounds. Allow 5 minutes for each One-on-One, with a little time in between for people to find their next partner. At the start of rounds 1-4, have everyone put their hand in the air, with Group One showing one finger and Group Two showing two fingers.
 - i. Have everyone from Group One initiate a One-on-One with someone from Group Two.
 - **Odd number of people?** If the groups are not exactly even, someone will wind up sitting out. If this is a confident group, that is okay. If working with a younger, more-sensitive crowd, just work it out for one pair to become a triad.
 - ii. Have everyone from Group Two initiate a One-on-One with someone from Group One.
 - The game will more effective if you **don't let people interview the person who just interviewed them.**
 - iii. Have everyone from Group One initiate a One-on-One with someone from Group Two.
 - iv. Have everyone from Group Two initiate a One-on-One with someone from Group One.
 - v. Free-for-all. Half the large group interviews someone else. Half are interviewed.
 - vi. Free-for-all. Half the large group interviews someone else. Half are interviewed.
 - In the free-for-alls, some may be interviewed twice, some may interview twice; some may do one of each.
4. **Choose the Organizers.** (5 minutes):
 - a. There should be **one organizer for every 5 people in the group + 1 additional organizer.** (8-9 people -> 2 organizers; 10-14 people -> 3 organizers; 15-19 people -> 4 organizers; etc.)
 - b. Use some method like drawing lots to choose the organizers. (For example, if you have 10 people, put 7 blank index cards into a deck with 3 that have a giant letter 'O' on them. Deal them out randomly. The ones who get an 'O' are organizers.)
5. **Break** (15 minutes): Have everyone who is not an organizer take a 15 minute break.

6. **No break for organizers!** Give each organizer a CRISIS GENERATOR sheet, a CRISIS NARRATIVE & RESPONSE sheet and a dice. Have them follow the instructions for generating a “Crisis Narrative”. Assist them as needed, but explain they will need to be ready in 15 minutes.
 - Some organizers may need help generating their crisis narrative. You can work with them, or perhaps tell them they can have a friend help them generate the narrative.
7. **Recruitment** (20 minutes): Once everyone is back together, there will be three recruitment rounds of 5 minutes each. Each round will usually double the number of people involved—although this depends on how many people approached agree to help.
 - a. Round #1: Each organizer approaches one person they did a One-on-One with, explains the Crisis Narrative and invites them to an “Event Planning Session” to respond to the situation.
 - Facilitators, please emphasize: **Their pitch should include something about the person they learned during the One-on-One.**
 - b. Round #2: Both the organizer and the person they approached in round #1 simultaneously approach someone they did a One-on-One with and invite them to the Event Planning Session.
 - This assumes that the person approached in round #1 agrees to help. They may not, in which case that person does nothing this round and the organizer tries again by themselves.
 - c. Round #3: The organizer and up to 3 other people who have agreed to help all approach people they did One-on-Ones with to invite them to the Event Planning Session.
 - By this time (possibly as early as round #1), several people will have received **multiple invitations**. They should choose who to help based on the crisis narrative and how well the invitation was personalized for them.
8. **Noting People With No Invitations** (5 minutes): Facilitators, do not miss this teachable moment!
 - a. Ask people to raise their hand if they have not received an invitation to a planning event. Note for the group that there are unutilized human resources out there!
 - b. Wonder out loud why these people have no invitation. Were they interviewed less by other people? (It is possible to be interviewed only twice and to have done four interviews.) Note that when it comes to relational power, being known by others is vital, or you will never hear about things happening in your community.
 - c. At this point, you probably want to just assign these stragglers to planning sessions.
 - **OPTIONAL:** However, if the group dynamics are right, you could assign all the stragglers to a new group, the “**Go See a Movie Group**.” They could plan a social outing and try to invite others in their network to come with them. This would represent the fact that community organizing around serious issues faces competition from more idle pursuits. (Yes, the “Go See a Movie Group” could win the game.)
9. **Event Planning** (20 minutes): The event organizers should work with their group to plan an event using the “Event Planning Worksheet”.
 - **OPTIONAL:** It is possible that people with multiple invitations might choose to attend a different event than the one they planned. Give them a chance to shift groups now.
10. **Sharing the Events** (10 minutes per event): Each team explains their crisis narrative and how they are responding to it with their event.
11. **Scoring; Winner; Debrief** (15 minutes): Each team totals the number of points of all people who attended the event. The team with the highest score wins. Give a round of applause. Then spend some time asking participants to reflect on the experience.

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LT COMMUNITY ORGANIZING, ABR.

INTRODUCTION & POINTS

Thank you for playing “Long-Term Community Organizing, Abridged”. In this game, you will learn about community organizing and practice key skills in a fun way, with just enough competition to keep it interesting. The game is “Abridged,” because community organizing is a long term process, taking months & years to build relationships.

Before I was trained in community organizing by the Industrial Areas Foundation (www.industrialareasfoundation.org), I thought people always organized around issues. You pick an issue and then you find the people. The training suggested a different view. By the time an issue comes up, you don’t have time to start finding the people. You have to find the people first. The primary capital of organizing is relationships. You build a network of relationships first and then when an issue (or crisis) arises, you utilize that network to respond quickly and effectively.

This simulation/game makes this point by walking participants through a relationship-building technique called a “One-on-One”, where participants get to know each other in an intentional way. Then a few randomly chosen participants are presented with a random ‘crisis’ which they are to respond to utilizing their network. These ‘organizers’ will invite people to plan an event and then to show up for the (simulated) event. The team who attracts the most points worth of people to their event wins!

This game was written by Mike Capron for the 2017 Civic Games Design Contest.
Mike is a pastor in the Presbyterian Church (USA) and lives in Verona, NJ

How knowledgeable and connected are you about politics in your community? Whenever you get points for a line, put the number in the right hand column, then total your points at the bottom. (These questions assume a USA governmental structure. Please adapt them for your country.)

Are you a citizen of the country in which you reside?	30 points	
How many languages can you speak?	20 points each	
Have you lived in your current area for more than 10 years?	20 points	
How many parents, grandparents, siblings, cousins, aunts and uncles live within 1 hour of you?	3 points each	
Do you work or go to school within 10 miles of where you live?	20 points	
How many voluntary organizations do you belong to that have face-to-face meetings? (churches, sports leagues, arts groups, civic organizations, etc.)	15 points each	
Can you name the US Senators from your state?	5 points each	
Can you name your US congressional Representative?	10 points	
How many state or county representatives or elected judges can you name?	10 points each	
How many officials serving your municipality can you name? (mayors, clerks, councilmen, zoning officials, etc.)	15 points each	
Have you ever been to a municipal building to do <i>anything</i> ? (dog license, building permit, court, pay tax bill, etc.)	5 points	
Did you vote in an election within the last two years?	5 points	
Have you contacted any elected representative in any way in the last two years?	30 points	
Have you ever spoken to any elected representative (or a member of their staff) in person on any issue of concern?	30 points	
Have you ever marched or protested about a political issue in any way?	30 points	
How many <i>local</i> newspapers do you read regularly? (National news doesn’t count!)	20 points each	
How many professional journalists could you call and they would know who you are?	50 points each	
	TOTAL:	

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The most vital tool in community organizing is the One-on-One meeting. You might wind up having some of these spontaneously, but more often you will have to call someone and make an appointment. When introducing yourself, don't identify yourself too narrowly. For example, introducing yourself as an animal right advocate will stimulate people who share your interest, but may turn others off. For this type of community organizing, building relationships precedes working on issues. Most One-on-Ones in real life should be about 30 minutes, but for this game it will be closer to 5, so get to it!

Here are some example lines you might use to initiate a One-on-One.

- *"I'm new to the neighborhood and I'm trying to get to know people."*
- *"_____ told me that you have lived here for a long time. Could I come speak with you and hear your story?"*
- *"I'm a member of _____ church. We are trying to find out more about community needs. I'd love to sit down with you and hear your perspective."*

Once you sit down with the person, you need to say enough about yourself to be polite, but mostly you want to listen. Ask open-ended questions: "What brought you to this neighborhood?" or "What do you want others to know about you?" or "What do you think are the biggest problems this community is facing right now?" Questions of motivation are great too, "What gets you out of bed in the morning?"

Stories and experiences are the best. Let's suppose the two of you share a passion for children. If they have stories about how the playgrounds used to be safe in a now-dangerous neighborhood, or can tell an impactful story about something wonderful or tragic happened to a child, that is golden! These are the kinds of core narratives that shape a community. Community organizers need to learn them.

In a Real One-on-One...

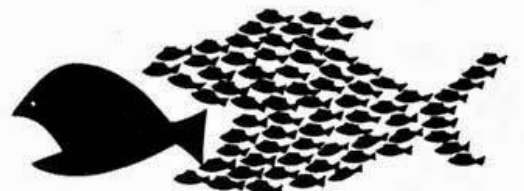
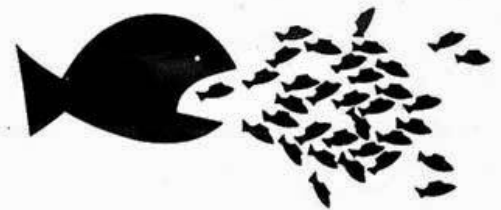
It would be vital to exchange contact information. You can do that if you want to, but since this is a game, no one should feel obligated.

Another essential question for a real One-on-One, would be: "Who else do you know that I should speak to?" followed by, "May I tell them you gave me their name?" For purposes of this game, this is unhelpful. But remember it when you are doing the real thing!

In a real One-on-One, you wouldn't take notes. Your note taking might make the person nervous and interfere with the conversation flow. Instead, you would take notes the instant the conversation ends, while things are still fresh in your memory. Sit down in your car and fill out a One-on-One record form. Since this is a game, it is okay to take notes during the One-on-One. You should use the log sheets on the back of this page to do this.

Remember that you only keep a log for the people you interview, not when you are the one being interviewed.

You will be interviewed twice and interview at least two other people. Then there will be two "free-for-all" rounds where you either interview or are interviewed. Being interviewed more times gets you more invitations. Interviewing gives you more people to invite.



<p>Their Name: (contact info)</p> <p>What do you love about this neighborhood/city?</p> <p>What are some concerns that you have?</p> <p>What are you passionate about? (What gets you out of bed in the morning?)</p> <p>Your own questions...</p> <p>(In a real life One-on-One, you would ask who they know you should talk to.)</p>	<p>Their Name: (contact info)</p> <p>What do you love about this neighborhood/city?</p> <p>What are some concerns that you have?</p> <p>What are you passionate about? (What gets you out of bed in the morning?)</p> <p>Your own questions...</p> <p>(In a real life One-on-One, you would ask who they know you should talk to.)</p>
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Congratulations, you are an organizer! Now we are going to generate a crisis for you to organize around. You are going to use dice and the tables on the back of this sheet to get some facts about your crisis. Then you will use your imagination to produce a crisis narrative. Your narrative will help you recruit people for the team you are building to respond to the crisis. Here are some examples of crisis facts and a crisis narrative that might emerge from them...

Example #1 – The problem has to do with: *“Violence by protestors/rioters”*

[We rolled a 1 and a 6 to get this from Table #1]

The people suffering from this are: *“A group defined by economic status, immigration status, profession, age or veterans.”* [Table #2]

So far, government has: *“Delayed/Not responded at all.”* [Table #3]

- Here is where you get to apply your imagination. You need to decide who is protesting and committing violence. You also need to decide who is being hurt by this. There are lots of choices for this one: *“Anti-immigrant protests by white supremacists turn violent.”* Or you could flip it, *“Immigrants upset by anti-immigrant rhetoric vent their frustration in poor neighborhoods. (This brings in the economic status.)”* Or, *“People under 30 invade Wall Street demanding student debt relief and things get badly out of hand. Banking staff are barricaded in their offices.”*

Example #2 – The problem has to do with: *“Too many panhandlers, homeless people sleeping/sitting in public spaces. (Or homeless not allowed to sleep in public spaces.) Lack of homeless shelters.”*

[We rolled a 2 and a 1 to get this from Table #1]

The people suffering from this are: *“Adherents of a religion.”* [Table #2]

So far, government has: *“Underreacted.”* [Table #3]

- Tricky one. Are the adherents of a religion the homeless people or are they the ones suffering because of the homeless people? How about, *“Muslim women with hijab are being denied space in shelters that receive government funds.”* You could do something similar with Sikhs in turbans, but there probably has to be a way of identifying the religious group for them to be discriminated against. Or, perhaps *“Panhandlers are congregating in a Jewish business district.”* Do local government officials dislike the religious group? Is that why they won't do anything?

Example #3 – The problem has to do with: *“Under or Over Enforcement of Health, Safety, Zoning Codes (Consequences might include Unsafe buildings, inability to construct low-income housing & churches. Over-worry about things like traffic and parking.)”* [We rolled a 5 and a 1 to get this.]

The people suffering from this are: *“An individual or family.”* [Table #2]

So far, government has: *“Overreacted.”* [Table #3]

- Since we are dealing with code issues and a single family, it sounds like local government may be the presenting problem here. How about, *“Home of poor family found unsafe for children.”* If the family lives in an expensive area, they may have to move to another school district, perhaps one less safe or with worse schools. Thinking ahead, there are a range of options for your response. You could try to change the actions of the local government, or you could coordinate an effort to fix up the house so it was safe.

LT COMMUNITY ORGANIZING, ABR.

CRISIS GENERATOR-TABLES

Table #1: The problem has to do with... [Roll dice once for the macro-category and again for the specific problem area.]

1. Violence
 - 1.1. By police/law enforcement
 - 1.2. By gangs
 - 1.3. By terrorists
 - 1.4. Domestic violence
 - 1.5. Ordinary crime
 - 1.6. By protestors/rioters
2. Housing/Homelessness
 - 2.1. Too many panhandlers, homeless people sleeping/sitting in public spaces. (Or homeless not allowed to sleep in public spaces.) Lack of homeless shelters.
 - 2.2. Existing housing is unsafe/undesirable. Many vacant buildings. Drug houses.
 - 2.3. Development is leading to gentrification of neighborhood. (Neighborhood getting too expensive for existing residents.)
 - 2.4. Lack of businesses in neighborhood: banks, grocery stores, pharmacy, health care.
 - 2.5. Lack of vital services relevant to area: Veterans, unemployment office, social services, drug treatment)
 - 2.6. Problems with landlords.
3. Social & Physical Environment
 - 3.1. Contaminated Water Supply
 - 3.2. Industrial Accident
 - 3.3. Natural Disaster (Flood, Forest Fire, Earthquake)
 - 3.4. Lack of Public Spaces: parks, public pools, libraries. (Or such places are unsafe.)
 - 3.5. High levels of tension between ethnic, religious or political groups.
 - 3.6. Concern over children: teenage pregnancy, need for family planning services. (Or want to protest abortions/abortion services).
4. Education
 - 4.1. Under-funded public schools. (Or property taxes too high.)
 - 4.2. Local school ranked poorly.
 - 4.3. Need more (or less) school choice, vouchers, etc.
 - 4.4. Objection to particular program or curriculum.
 - 4.5. Problems in school environment: bullying, drugs, etc.
 - 4.6. School Administration Scandal: embezzlement, sexual abuse, discrimination, hostile environment for teachers.
5. Economic Opportunity / Legal Problems
 - 5.1. Under or Over Enforcement of Health, Safety, Zoning Codes (Consequences might include Unsafe buildings, inability to construct low-income housing & churches. Over-worry about things like traffic and parking.)
 - 5.2. Lack of public transportation.
 - 5.3. An important business in the area is closing, or threatening to close.
 - 5.4. People lack basic skills: job-finding, parenting, English language.
 - 5.5. Police, legal system or government services treating people unequally.
 - 5.6. Lack of child care.
6. *Re-Roll.*

Table #2: The people suffering from the problem are... [Roll dice.]

1. An individual or family
2. A neighborhood
3. Adherents of a religion
4. An ethnic group
5. A group defined by sexuality or gender
6. A group defined by economic status, immigration status, profession, age or veterans.

Table #3: So far, government has [Roll dice.]

- 1-2 Overreacted.
- 3-4 Underreacted.
- 5 Had a mixed (or balanced) response.
- 6 Delayed/Not responded at all.

"What Happens Next?" – Information for Organizers

1. Using the CRISIS GENERATOR TABLES you are going to find the facts about your crisis and write your Crisis Narrative, using the section below.
2. Then the facilitator will announce a series of *Recruitment* rounds where you and the other organizers will seek out people to help respond to your crisis. **You can only recruit people who you did a One-on-One with.** Then they can help by recruiting people they did One-on-Ones with.
3. After the recruitment, you and your *team* will gather to do **Event Planning** using the worksheet on the back of this page.
4. Finally, all the organizing teams will describe their event to the whole group. We will tally points to see which team wins.

Your Crisis Narrative

Get this information by consulting the CRISIS GENERATOR TABLES and rolling dice.

Table #1: The problem has to do with...

Table #2: The people suffering from the problem are...

Table #3: So far, government has...

Write Your Crisis Narrative...

IMPORTANT: You need to agree with the facilitator about a **location for your event planning meeting.** This could be a corner of a large room, a spot in the hall or a breakout room. You need to be able to tell the people you recruit where this is. You might want to hand them a note, or perhaps put a sign up with your name on it in your location. (Things will be confusing when everyone needs to go to their meetings all at once. Plan for this!)



Photo credit: bibendum, Creative Commons/Flickr

“Most people will do the right thing most of the time given the opportunity. My job is to give them the opportunity.” – Community Organizer at IAF training

Event Planning – Do this with your team after recruitment!

1. What does the team want to accomplish?

(Answer this for the short-term and the local! For example, it doesn't matter if you want world peace. Instead of attaining world peace, you will convince two groups of parents to cooperate at a school board meeting, or two politicians from different parties to vote together on a particular issue.)

2. Who needs to change their mind for you to accomplish your goal?

3. What action do you need that person (or group) to take?

4. What benefit will come to that person (or group) if they do what you want?

5. What problems will they face if they do what you want?

6. What sort of an event will help persuade this person (or group) to take the action you want? (If this person is doing something wrong, you could ask what sort of event would shame them into taking the action you want.)

Examples: A quiet, polite meeting where you ask for their help. (In someone's home?)
 An already-scheduled event that your group attends, like a public hearing.
 A public demonstration or protest?
 A service project where you fix up a house or pick up trash or paint over graffiti?

7. Where and when will your event take place?

8. What is your basic plan for what will happen at the event?

9. What kind of publicity will amplify the effect of your event?

10. How will you get that publicity?