

Palme Academy Introductory Course: **Module 5**

HOW TO RUN AND REPRESENT A PARTY

# GROWING AND CONSOLIDATING

Organising, recruitment and training

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# Introduction

## What is a political party?

In most democratic political systems in the world, political parties play a crucial role in the way in which democracy functions. It is political parties that stand for election, who provide lists of candidates, and who write policy platforms for voters to consider. It is political parties that legislate and make decisions that affect all citizens. It is political parties that can be held accountable for their decisions and whose power can be taken away in free and fair elections.

Political parties' function as a link between citizens and political power. They organise people so that they can have a role in making political decisions. They can bring together voters, make them members, educate them on social issues, and mobilise them to make their own voices heard. When political parties function well, they are not only involved in creating policy in parliaments or running campaigns, they also help to make political and democratic influence a living reality for more people. They become a tool for people to influence social development, and to take control over their own lives.

### What kind of party does a social democratic party aim to be?

There are many different types of models for political parties. If you want to learn more about how to form and develop a party, you will first need to define what party model you intend to use. Is it a party that consists mainly of a group of elected politicians representing various interest groups? Is it a party controlled from the top down – termed a cadre party? Or is it perhaps a populist party centred around a strong leader, with supporters rather than full members in the party's base?

In this course material, we of course assume that a social democratic party is basically and ought to be a popular movement party where the power in the party derives from its members and moves upwards through its organisation. It needs an inclusive and democratic way of working that features internal democracy, representativeness, and transparency.

The basis of such a party is the democratic grass roots movement and substantial popular participation. It is a party that brings together people of flesh and blood, who have commitment and a common vision of how our society should function and develop. In this sense, there is no

difference between a popular movement party and other popular movements. People join forces to play football or put on plays in a theatre group, to form a cooperative, or to learn to sew or weave. Those who want to be involved in changing the conditions under which people live in a broader sense become active in a political party. That is the foundation of a popular movement party.

The organisational focus of such a party is on developing strong local structures with a lot of active members. It is based on the idea that parties in a democracy should not only play an important role in parliaments but also in the surrounding community and civil society. Political parties, especially if they are also in power, are often seen as representatives of parliament or the government and not as representatives of people in everyday life. To avoid this situation, parties must create broad, inclusive organisations with democratic structures and ensure that they work in a way that is visible and which makes a difference in people's everyday lives.

### *But how do you do that?*

Democratic parties in different parts of the world can learn a lot from each other's experiences and practices. This introductory course and its modules focus on how a party can strengthen its organisational and political capacity to become a strong and democratic party with active members and inclusive structures and activities. The strength of a party depends to a large extent on how democratic it is and how well the organisation functions. This requires organisational structures and ways of working that function well, and a culture of openness to people actively sharing in and participating in the political work of the party. A strong democratic party that is confident in itself encourages debate, active participation and criticism, and self-criticism.





## An introductory course in running a party

This course is intended to provide an introduction to and an overview of how to form, organise, develop, and represent this kind of democratic popular movement party – from the top down and the bottom up.

Its target group is leaders and active members of social democratic parties. You might be leaders in many different areas at the national, regional, or local level. The course emphasises the local level, however, since the local level forms the base of a social democratic popular movement party, and is the level that involves the most people. The material for this course is also useful for active members who are not leaders, in which case it can be used for self-study or as part of local member courses.

### A six-module course

The course is divided into six self-contained modules. Each module has its own course material, which is intended to be used for 3–4 meetings of leaders and active members in the party in the form of a study circle to discuss the questions and ideas that the module raises. But the number of meetings to cover each module is flexible.

One meeting per module is also an option, although you will then need to pick out which of the topics and questions you are going to discuss, as you will probably not have time to cover everything. As a participant, you can of course choose to take the entire course or to focus specifically on one of its modules.

### The six modules in this introductory course are:

#### Module 1

Forming and Structuring a party

#### Module 2

Holding Elections and Reaching Decisions

#### Module 3

Formulating Policy and Leading the Way

#### Module 4

Reaching Out and Connecting

#### Module 5

Growing and Consolidating

#### Module 6

Representing and Governing



## Module 5: Growing and consolidating

A political party requires ongoing organising efforts to function and be successful. All the modules in this introductory course are ultimately about how parties organise and how their organisations develop.

*The first module* covered the basic constitutional and organisational structures. *The second module* covered the establishment of decision-making and management structures. *The third* was about the optimum organisation for policy development and *the fourth* covered how a party should organise itself to communicate and shape public opinion.

In this *fifth module*, we discuss the importance to parties of growth and building a stronger organisation locally with many active members who can continuously develop

their skills and expertise to make the best contribution to the party's activities. The aim is to give you a good practical introduction to how political parties can increase their resources and strengthen their organisation by:

- setting up and developing their activities, and growing locally,
- using community and field campaign organising locally,
- recruiting, welcoming and motivating new members through member development, member care, and operations development,
- working in a structured way with training and skills development for members and elected representatives.

The aim is to offer practical knowledge, methods and tips for how you can plan and develop your own local party's efforts in these areas.



The Swedish Social Democrats' Party Chair Stefan Löfven with Party Secretary Lena Rådström Baastad, Minister of Finance Magdalena Andersson and members of the Swedish Social Democratic Youth League.



## BASED ON THE SWEDISH EXPERIENCE

This course is often based on the experiences and organisation of social democracy in Sweden. In other words, it is not meant to be a blueprint. The circumstances for political parties are different in different parts of the world.

Economic development will have progressed to different levels. The political conflict lines will be different. In some countries, ethnic conflict lines are very apparent. In others, class conflicts are the most predominant. In some countries, the political process is prejudiced by an earlier or ongoing struggle for freedom. In a country without a long tradition of a multi-party system, or in a relatively young democracy, the challenges are different from those in countries where democratic elections have been held over a long period of time. As a participant in this course, you may utilise the experiences of Sweden's social democratic movement and the ways it is organised. These experiences can then be applied to your own environment and adapted to your own experiences and circumstances.

That said, we would like to emphasise that the experiences of social democracy in Sweden can be of interest to study in other parts of the world. Sweden's Social Democratic Party has long experience of winning elections and being in government, always by virtue of being the biggest party. The membership of Sweden's Social Democratic Party has been consistently large. The party has had regional and local branches throughout the country for a

long time and, in collaboration with other parts of civil society, has often been able to dominate the political agenda. A brief explanation for this strong position is that the party has been successful in bringing together large groups in society around a common, future-focused and solidarity-based social narrative, and through having a consistent goal to grow and change in pace with societal development.

This does not mean that there are no challenges left for social democracy in Sweden. On the contrary. In recent decades, the labour market has changed dramatically. Traditional working-class occupations have become fewer. After several decades of neoliberalism, nationalism and more traditional values have become a new factor in politics, and have increased support for conservative parties. At the same time, strongly growing individualism, particularly in the larger cities, continues to attract voters to more liberal parties. More and more citizens are also choosing alternative forms of political engagement in single-issue organisations (e.g. the environment, feminism or migration). It is more difficult to get people to get involved in party politics, to sit on an Executive, and to take on time-consuming official roles. These are the challenges facing many political parties today.

In short, a party must always be flexible and ready to innovate in line with societal development. We are all part of an ongoing learning process. This is why it is

so enjoyable and challenging to be part of a political party.

### Things to bear in mind

How a party is organised at different levels in the society varies from country to country. In some cases there may be more levels; and in others, there may be fewer. This module presents the models for the structure of the Swedish Social Democratic Party's organisation. So you will find that there may be differences in the structure of the party organisation in your country. If you do not recognise your party's model in this module, then you should try to match the levels described here to your party's structure and explain why your party is organised in this way. The important thing here is to understand how the party organisation's fundamental decision-making levels are linked to and function in tandem with the society in which it operates, and internally with the organisational levels in the party.

There may also be differences in the local branch. The local branch is the party's base and every party member must belong to a local branch. In the Swedish Social Democratic Party, this level is called the *arbetarekommun*, and corresponds to one of Sweden's 290 local government areas (municipalities). One local branch of the party per LGA/municipality. There may also be underlying social democratic associations and clubs that together form the local branch. ■

## FACTS

### THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS IN SWEDEN

The Swedish Social Democratic Party was formed in 1889 as part of a broader popular movement and organising process with the aim of demanding political and economic rights for workers. The party's founders included trade union organisations who believed that the labour movement needed a voice in parliament. In the first few years, it was about demanding democracy, universal suffrage, and better social conditions for workers. The party formed its first government in 1920 and has since then been in government for a total of over 70 years. During these years, the party's main project has been to develop, and further develop, within the framework of 'the Swedish model'

– a modern welfare state aimed at increasing citizens' equality, social security and freedom. For a long time, there were only five parties in Sweden's *Riksdag* (national parliament) and the Social Democrats often received over 40 per cent of the votes in elections. Today there are more parties, and the Social Democrats Party has lost some of its broad support, and often has to form coalitions with other parties in order to be able to govern.

**90,000 members**  
**290 local branches**  
**26 regional organisations**

The party currently has about 90,000 members who are organised in 290 local branches (*Arbetarekommuner*). Under these are a large number of associations and clubs, in residential areas and city districts in particular, which together with the local branch make up the basic organisation of the party. The local branches are in turn organised into 26 regional organisations called Party Districts (*Partidistrikt*). The party is classed as a mass-based party and its organisation is based on federal principles, where the regional organisations together constitute the party nationally, with the National Conference as the highest decision-making body. ■





# Organising

## – changing society together

Organising people and their engagement are fundamental to a democratic party and its strength. A political party is ultimately its members. It is from them that influence and power over the party's policies ultimately emanates. They are the ones who decide on policy, carry out its daily activities and are given the tasks of leading other members and representing the party.

If the party has many members, it represents many people, and has many voices that can promote the party's policies throughout the country. They play a central role in ensuring that the party's policies are widely supported by the electorate and can then be implemented in the community. It is ultimately about resources and power. About being many who work together to achieve shared goals.

This can be said to be particularly important for parties based on popular movements; democratic parties with many members and a significant local presence in people's everyday lives. Unlike more elitist parties which have often represented wealthier groups, organising ordinary people and their engagement in politics lie at the heart and are the strength of social democratic parties and their theory concerning how to change society. Social democracy's fundamental view is that freedom is also something that we humans can only achieve jointly with others. Broad participation in politics is therefore essential to democracy.

A party that recruits many members and is able to support and motivate them to participate actively in politics also has many advantages over other parties. These include:

- Larger networks and points of contact in the community that make it easier to identify trends and learn about

the social problems that large numbers of people are experiencing in their everyday lives.

- More people means that more individuals can participate in policy development and contribute new thoughts and ideas to the party.
- More people can be influencers, messengers and campaign workers.
- More people can be included in the group from which elected representatives are chosen within and outside the party.
- More people can pay membership dues and contribute to the party's fundraising activities.
- More people can share the day-to-day work involved in the party's operations and organising.

This is why there can never really be any break in the party's recruitment efforts. You must actively recruit at all times and adapt to the methods most effective for the country and the times in which the party is operating. The local level of the party plays a special role here. A strong local presence, through many local branches, facilitates local visibility and member recruitment. The local branch is the gateway to party membership; it is at this level that



people are reached, can talk about minor and major social problems and be informed about the party's policies and their opportunities to influence it – so that they can then take the next step to join and be organised within the party.

## “Don't mourn. Organise.”

Joe Hill, Swedish-American trade unionist at his execution in Salt Lake City, USA, in 1915

However, political party organising involves more than just growing as a party. It is also about the core of the party, its members, participating actively and contributing in the best way. In this way, the party organisation can become stronger and more effective in terms of developing policy that addresses urgent social problems, gaining support for those policies from the electorate and then being able to implement this policy. This part of organising happens in particular when members get together and acquire skills and knowledge by studying and attending courses that deal with theory and practice. This is how members learn deeply about the party's political ideology and policies, its organisation and coordination, and become skilled, successful representatives of the party.

Consequently, organising is about strengthening the party quantitatively and qualitatively. About broadening and deepening its reach within the community. It is about constantly growing locally through recruiting and motivating new members who, through their membership of the party, develop together so that they are able to contribute

more effectively to the organisation's work as a whole to change society in the direction that the party wants. People have always mobilised and organised themselves to bring about change. Political organising is about uniting and changing.

The Swedish Social Democrats' organising has been fundamental to the success of the party. With strong local support, the party managed to organise the large numbers of workers early on. As the number of members grew, the strength of the party grew as well. The more members the party was able to gather, the greater weight the party's demands will carry for a fairer and more equal society, and the greater the political influence the party will have on social development. A large, aware and engaged member base was the starting point for broad change in society.

Whether your party has a long history or recently founded, you have this in common with all parties: the importance of ongoing organising to grow and become stronger as a party. This does not happen by itself. It requires active efforts for the members to acquire the right tools, methods and knowledge. Parties often focus more on preparing for elections or election campaigns. However, it is important to focus at all times on the fundamental issues of organisational development and to embed election campaigns in a broader strategy for the long-term development of the party. Elections come and go. Ultimately, it is the party that should persist. The party can win elections and be in power but that power can always be lost. It is therefore always important to keep your house in order. That is the only thing you ultimately have. Everything else is on borrowed time.

### FACTS

#### THE SWEDISH SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY AS A POPULAR MOVEMENT PARTY

Swedish social democracy is a popular movement founded on democracy. The Swedish Social Democratic Party's vision for how society ought to develop requires close contact with members and voters. The party must therefore be an active, modern popular movement with a local presence and be anchored in people's everyday lives. The party's mission has basically three pillars:

##### **Recruit, welcome and activate:**

We need to bring together and activate Social Democrats to ensure our ideology has an impact. Being many and consisting of people from all walks of life has a value in itself that reflects well the composition of our society. But this

means we need to keep talking to people and to open up our organisation. This also means that, as a party, we are in tune with the times. Our power to create the society we want is predicated on how many people we manage to bring together in our party.

##### **Train and develop:**

Learning new things can unleash the power that exists among our members. Social democracy is strengthened as a political force by giving our members the opportunity to grow and develop politically. We grow and develop as a party through study circles, training and international sharing of experience. This is why we need to train our members

and give leaders the opportunity to grow and develop in their leadership.

##### **Influence and change:**

Our ultimate mission is to influence and change society based on our social democratic ideology. This is in fact a dual mission. We change society by influencing decisions in elected assembly arenas and we do so through popular movement initiatives and other forms of advocacy for our ideas and values. We also have a democratic mission – a mission that is bigger than our own party and involves us shouldering the task, as a popular movement, of creating a society based on trust and democratic ideals. ■



## Local organising – becoming established and growing locally

A party can be likened to a tree with the local party units as its roots. The roots must be strong for the tree to be stable and grow. The stronger the local level is, the stronger the party will be as a whole. The local branches play an important role in policy development within the party and its advocacy activities, with many feelers out in the community and bearers of our messages. This is where the party encounters people in their everyday lives and can involve them in the party's activities.

Local organising is important as it allows the party to reach out and remain in sync with societal development, which means that its policies are more likely to be perceived as relevant by the voters.

If the party is in power, the local level is an important channel through which the party can provide information about its policies and explain them, and get the necessary feedback on how these policies are perceived in the community. If the party is in opposition, the local level is essential for mobilising and organising the people needed to win the next elections. There is a clear connection between the organisational strength of a party, with a network of local branches and a large membership, and how well it performs in elections. Parties with a large local presence

are more active and conduct larger campaigns and more outreach activities.

The local level is also where the main responsibility for recruiting members and engaging them in the party's activities lies. It is through the local branch that individual members are organised in the party and can participate in the party's internal democratic processes and outreach activities. The local branch also plays an important role in the training of members and as a recruitment base for the party leaders and elected representatives. In short, the local level is key to the development and growth of a party in terms of the number of members, its geographical range and expertise. When the party grows through organising, it is done mainly at the local level.

## Taking the first steps towards local establishment

When the Swedish Social Democratic Party was founded at the end of the 19th century and started to organise itself all over the country, this was done by social democratic agitators travelling around the country and speaking to large crowds in squares and in packed halls. They highlighted the great social injustices that the vast majority of people recognised, and offered a way forward to tackle them. People were given the opportunity to join and be involved in organising even more people in the political struggle of the labour movement. In addition to public meetings and appearances, newspapers played an important role in the party's early organising. By starting several social democratic newspapers around the country, the party could spread its ideas, information about social injustices could reach people, and opinion could be shaped on how these injustices could be rectified. In the newspapers, the party could also call meetings and organise the party's activities in practical terms.

A key step in local organising was to bring together a group of new members who were willing to form a new local branch to represent the party and hold members meetings, study circles and their own outreach gatherings. It was therefore important to identify local leaders who could coordinate and do this work in practice. Leaders who could take the initiative to cement the party organisation by calling a group of new members to an initial meeting, sitting on its executive and leading activities to mobilise and organise other workers and sympathisers.

When you read the history of the Swedish Social Democratic Party, you are often struck by how individual-centred the organising process was. Leaders were identified and supported by other leaders and they were constantly looking for new names to carry on the struggle; brave ordinary people who were aware of the risks of organising and mobilising people for demonstrations

and strikes. By pursuing the party's issues in a way that demonstrated commitment and engagement, all while recruiting, motivating and training new members, they helped the party grow in strength.

### How is this done today?

Of course, much has changed since the 19th century. What was then called agitation, today we would call advocacy; simply spreading information and arguing your case. Public meetings and newspapers no longer play such a dominant role either. Instead, much of the advocacy work, mobilisation and organising can be done digitally and via social media. As long as people have access to a mobile phone, it is possible to inform and mobilise thousands of people in a short time, even if your financial resources are limited. At the same time, competition for people's time and attention is much tougher today. Then there was no internet or TV. Outside work and home duties, there were fewer leisure activities available. Today, people are constantly flooded with information, news, messages and events on their mobile phones.

However, initiatives on social media, which dominate the media landscape today, do not automatically lead to more members. Often, political actions on these kinds of media are short-lived even if they are able to mobilise a group around a single issue for a short time. But, together with other digital services, they can be valuable tools for communication and coordination as part of broader organising. Facebook and WhatsApp can be effective channels for discussing politics, advocacy and holding events and activities. File-sharing services such as Google Drive or Dropbox allow many people to access material at the same time. This can be anything from lists of participants and manuals to schedules for activities, op-eds for advocacy or flyers as campaign material. Other digital services can easily be used for crowdsourcing and fundraising

In short, digital services make it easier to mobilise and coordinate large groups of people to work together. Most successful parties today have digitised large parts of their





organisation. Both internal planning and coordination documents and external recruitment and campaign initiatives are stored and shared digitally with members. Most communication between members is also digital these days. Large contact databases of members, donors and other sympathisers can be easily built up. Successful political movements combine these digital tools seamlessly with traditional methods of organising, and do not see them as two parallel activities.

Despite all the new digital possibilities, however, the fundamentals of organising are the same today as in the late 19th century. A group of committed people needs to take the initiative to bring other people together to start working for the party in a structured way. At central level, a party needs a well-thought-out national strategy for developing its organising activities at the local level. Where, when and how should local organising be done? Who is responsible for this? What resources are available? It is also good to have an idea of the best methods for your own organising efforts. For how the work should be done on the ground.

### Policy, advocacy and organising go hand in hand

The political campaigns of a party go hand in hand with organising at the local level on the ground. It is the political issues in people's everyday lives that will motivate them to take a stand and take action. It is primarily through these issues that the party can coordinate and engage people to participate in politics. Here is a brief summary of local organising: take initiatives and draw attention to a local political issue that strongly engages people and brings many people together. Invite people to participate in the action. Recruit sympathisers to become members, and identify particularly engaged people who can participate in and lead the campaign moving forward. Once there is a core of members, take the step to establish a local branch that can continue working with party policy, advocacy and organising.

In this way, organising can be thought of as political campaigning where an important step is that the participants organise. Advocacy can be done in a variety of ways – via social media or public meetings at which engaged sympathisers can be easily identified and contacted. However, there are other, more structured ways of working with campaigns that are directly based on organising. Community organising and field campaign organising, with their organisational and leadership structures and using customised methods, can be effective ways of growing or beginning to establish a local party presence.

## Community organising

Community organising, which is closely related to the social democratic organising tradition, is a method of listening to what people are concerned about in their local communities, and then helping them to be part of the change by

participating in and leading local campaigns. These can be about the need for decent housing, secure work, access to health care and education or a safer local environment. All the sorts of issues that play a central role in people's daily lives. By listening actively, having many conversations and supporting people's political engagement in practical ways, the party can turn a major local problem into a community-led, unifying political campaign. The first question a community organiser always asks is "who are my people?" And not "what is my issue?"

This method leads to genuine two-way communication that can build trust in the party and relationships with people at a deep level. It can also contribute to robust local democracy that counteracts people's sense of powerlessness by developing their capacity to win campaigns together and bring about the change they need. This empowers the participants and creates a sense of collective power that, by extension, also gives people reason to continue to engage in politics. Basically, it is also about transferring power from the elite to ordinary people. Instead of determining priorities and solutions from the top, you are instead building people power from below. The power of a social democratic party should always come from the many ordinary people who are engaged in it. Its mission is ultimately not just to be their voice, but to be their own means of achieving change.

In practice, the method involves active, structured, outreach campaigns that are about bringing people together and listening to them, identifying the issue to be worked on, creating a local campaign for change and recruiting people in the area who want to participate actively in the work.

If there is no local party member trained in the method, a central community organiser from the party can initiate the process. A key step is then to find and train local leaders who can continue organising by recruiting and training new participants and leaders. It is also possible to build alliances on issues between different existing groups in civil society locally. Leaders for the party's own local organising can often be found in these networks. Here is a list of the basic steps in community organising:

- Hold a meeting in the area to start a dialogue: Promote it on social media and by handing out flyers and putting up posters. Find out at the meeting what issues people care about. Identify the winnable campaign issue that is in line with the party's policies and views to pursue further. If there is already good knowledge about an issue that is clearly high on the agenda in the area, the meeting can be restricted from the outset to focusing on that issue.
- Build relationships among the participants and identify the people who are most engaged among the participants. Who do the participants themselves see as local leaders? In which local organisations are they involved? For example, this might be a trade union, a leisure association, a faith institution or a sports club.

- Who of these could imagine coming to the next meeting and being involved in the next step? Once you have built relationships and feel you have the beginnings of a team, ask for a commitment to help grow and manage the campaign in the area.
- In this respect, it is particularly important to identify those who are particularly engaged and motivated; people who many members of the group listen to and trust. Introduce them to and train them quickly in the method you are using. (Don't forget to recruit people who will participate in the party's activities to the party if they are not already members.)
- Take the next step in the outreach campaign and start advocating for issues, recruiting and organising in the area. Delegate responsibility to the team as soon as possible, but stay in close contact and be a coach in the ongoing process.
- Don't forget to be open to trying to include other local civil society groups in the campaign, and use the power of digital tools to organise activists and spread information about the campaign on social media.

**“[Community organising is] concerned with developing people's capacity to act on behalf of their interests. Developing this capacity is a long process that involves everything from building people's motivation, to equipping them with the skills for action, to creating opportunities and narratives that help them develop the sense that their participation – and collective action in general – matters.”**

Hahrie Han, Professor of Political Science at Johns Hopkins University, USA, and specialist in civic and political participation, social movements and organisation.

The key steps above are to build relationships in the area and among those involved, and to identify or facilitate the growth of local leaders. As well as having a simple method and carrying out training, which equips the activists to start organising locally themselves. It is essential to be relentless in your search for talent and grassroots leaders, as well as in the training and practical support given to them. In this way, the party can work on building stronger relationships in the local community, recruiting members and establishing new teams that can also start a local branch at a later stage.

It is a model for building the party 'from the bottom up'. It is also easier to first grow locally rather than start by creating regional party levels. However, at national level,

the party needs a long-term development plan for how to organise in order to grow, and which groups and geographical areas the party primarily wants to reach. Then the national party organisation should:

- Set goals, allocate resources and appoint people to be responsible for the organising work in the party organisation.
- Define practical methods for the work and develop simple manuals, tools and course plans.
- Implement national training sessions in different parts of the party on how to organise.
- Set up a national community organising force to initiate local work where the party lacks trained organisers or members.

For the party to succeed and have an impact, it is worthwhile creating a coordinating function and an internal centre of expertise for the activities high up in the party structure. Experience gained worldwide shows that, without a dedicated community organising programme, activities falter rapidly after an enthusiastic start. For example, like the British Labour Party, the party could appoint a National Director of Community Organising and set up a national campaign, organising and training academy to boost its members' skills, awareness and knowledge so that they can participate more effectively in building the party and campaign activities.



## RESULTS AFTER THE FIRST YEAR OF WORKING WITH COMMUNITY ORGANISING IN THE BRITISH LABOUR PARTY

In 2018, the British Labour Party decided to resume active community organising around the United Kingdom. The aim was to ensure that the party continues to act on the issues that are important to the working class and that their issues lie at the heart of the party's policy work.

During the first year, more than 3,500 people received leadership training and 70 courses were run around the country solely by the party's central Community Organising Team. The leaders supported by the team in their local communities encountered many stark stories in that work – from disabled pensioners in Gloucester who were experiencing hate crime as a result of cuts in the police force, to the mother who is helping to run a food bank, and the former steel worker who wanted be part of leading the Green Industrial Revolution.

These are stories that are not usually heard in the mainstream media. The team therefore also held digital training sessions on social media on how to build relationships in online communities. During the first year, hundreds of digital volunteers were trained in creating viral videos that tell people's stories.





## Field campaign organising

Community organising is an obvious and very effective point of departure when establishing and growing the party locally. There are also well-developed methods for working in a structured way with field campaign organising. It is a form of community organising that is often used in election campaigns to organise field campaigns that involve many participants and campaign teams doing door-to-door canvassing among voters. These practical methods can also be used in the party's work to advocate for their issues and establish the party locally even when there is no election campaign.

In most cases, it is not enough, as in the section above, to simply invite people in an area to a public meeting to reach them. Instead, it is necessary to actively go and visit people where they are to identify people who might want to come to a meeting and then hopefully get involved in the campaign locally. The most effective way to reach people is to go from house to house and door to door to talk to them individually. In the run-up to a campaign meeting, this also helps to sense the mood of the electorate and gather knowledge about the people who live in the area, their thoughts and what they are talking about.

Canvassing is a form of systematic, personal communication between parties and their voters that is used in field campaigns in areas that are important to the party. You can end up having many high-quality conversations and you can focus on those you want to reach instead of just being dependent on who spontaneously chooses to go to various public events. Using this method, you can recruit new members outside of the circle of those who seek contact with the party themselves. You can also increase the volume of these campaign activities step by

step. Many campaign managers and campaign workers can be recruited and trained, thus expanding the reach of the campaign.

Regular dialogue with voters is one way of developing the party's policies, shaping public opinion and persuading more people to vote for the party in elections. There are different types of canvassing which complement each other and have different purposes.

- Canvassing between elections can be used to talk to voters to find out what issues they believe to be the most important, learn more about how they view the party, and get them to contribute actively to the party's policy development.
- Canvassing during election campaigns is one of the most effective ways of getting people to vote for the party.

As we have already stated, the party's policies, advocacy and organising go hand in hand. In the party's local campaigns, the method is used to shape opinion for the party and its policies, but also to recruit and organise sympathisers in the party's local campaign and party activities. In fact, they are two sides of the same coin.

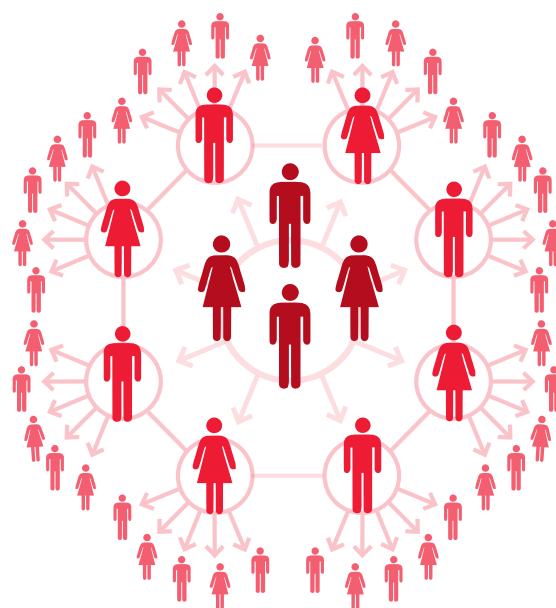
However, field campaigns that involve canvassing require a good organisation that can easily grow. There must be many organisers who divide areas between the campaign teams of sympathisers or members who will talk with the constituents. In field organising, this is often done using the 'snowflake' model. It is also an elaboration of the simple description of community organising that was previously presented, with the establishment of local campaign teams that can engage and recruit people and can then serve as embryos for more local party branches.



## Field campaign organising according to the snowflake model

The snowflake model was formulated by Dr Marshall Ganz, Community Organiser and Senior Lecturer in Leadership, Organizing, and Civil Society at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. It was the basis of organising in Barack Obama's field campaigns in the 2008 and 2012 elections. The core of this model is organising field campaigns in teams of members and activists. As illustrated below, the model gives them the opportunity to shape and own their own teams. Leadership is delegated downwards in the local organisation. Instead of having an organising model whereby a single leader communicates with everyone, as in a traditional campaign organisation, it has been replaced by a model in which there are many leaders at several levels who are connected in a network. In essence, it is no more complex than the usual party work in a popular movement party with a federative organisation model in which every local branch of the party is self-organising with its own leaders and a high degree of autonomy.

The model is based on there being a centre for a campaign, for example an election campaign management. A group of representatives from different parts of the country, or different parts of the city if it is in a local party, are then trained to become organisers. They recruit and train teams of approximately 5 people who then recruit more volunteers and teach them the methods so that they can become leaders in the campaign. As teams grow, they are divided, and the new teams are given new geographical responsibilities. Each team recruits and leads its own campaign efforts with activists and members in its regions or neighbourhoods. Each team has a clear geographical responsibility, and roles and tasks (who leads the canvassing, phone campaigns, recruitment and goal monitoring in the team's area) are distributed internally within the team. To understand the model, it is important to know that the teams are made up of leaders with different roles trained in different steps, who coordinate and lead groups of sympathisers and supporters in different campaign activities



in their geographical area. In other words, not everyone involved in these outreach activities needs to be part of the snowflake structure, but they can quickly become part of it through training and by becoming part of a team. Volunteers are seen, recruited, tested and developed in an ongoing process to become team members. This dynamic organising model allows the campaign organisation to grow exponentially. It is a particularly suitable method and structure for parties that have not yet built up a strong local branch. But it is also useful for well-established parties in their campaign work and recruitment to strengthen their local presence.

As we noted earlier, organising is about enabling people to turn their own resources into the power they need to implement the change they are looking for. Some call this structure the 'snowflake model', others 'distributed leadership'. No person or group of people has all the power; responsibility is divided sustainably and the structure is aimed at creating mutual trust and accountability. The approach is based on enabling others to act and take responsibility. The strength of a movement stems largely from its capacity to develop leadership and in this model all are responsible for identifying, recruiting and developing leaders. Leaders develop other leaders who in turn develop other leaders, and so on.

***“Organizing is a form of leadership that enables a constituency to turn its resources into the power to achieve its goals through recruitment, training, and development of leadership. Organizing is about equipping people (constituency) with the power (story and strategy) to make change (real outcomes).”***

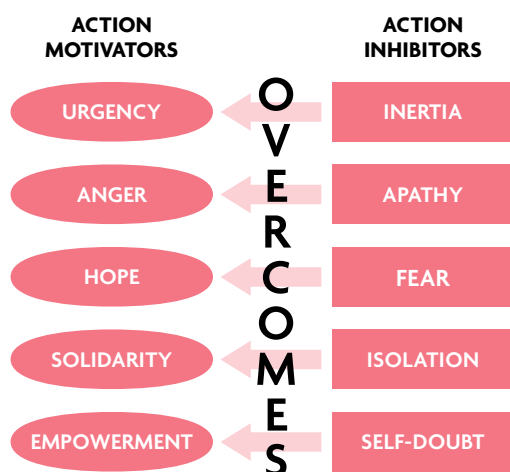
Marshall Ganz

Marshall Ganz's snowflake model and practice include five practical leadership methods that organisers need to master to succeed in their mission: telling stories, building relationships, structuring teams, strategizing and acting. Although organising is not a linear process, the first three methods (stories, building relationships, structuring teams) are used to build power within a community, while the last two methods (strategizing, acting) are about using that power to bring about the change you hope to achieve.

## Telling stories

Stories are used to communicate values and motivate people to act collectively. They can be about major social problems, why they have to be tackled, how they should be solved, and why this group in particular needs to do that. This creates a common purpose for members, and it is a way of motivating others to join the cause. In order to do so, it is first necessary to clarify and formulate common values in a way that encourages others to act collectively with the group.

The key to motivation is understanding that values inspire action through emotions. Stories enable us to communicate our feelings about what matters. Convincing stories are not abstract or intellectual; they are about people and about real experiences and have the ability to touch others. The ultimate aim of storytelling in organising is to inspire action, and organisers must therefore learn to mobilise the emotions that make this possible. Effective organisers therefore learn to adapt their stories to different audiences and target groups by starting from the current emotions of their listeners and then evoking mobilising emotions from them to motivate their audience to act.

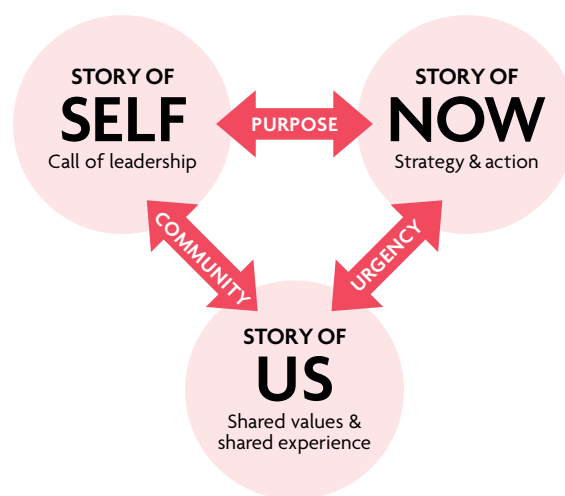


Source : Leading Change Network

The structure of a good story basically consists of three elements: a plot, a character and a moral. It then comes to life when the character faces a challenge, makes a choice and experiences a consequence of this. The narrator engages the audience when the narrator gets their audience

to identify with the character in the story. The goal is to elicit empathy for the character so that the audience are hopefully encouraged to think about their own challenges and choices, and to make them feel and rejoice in the consequences of the character's choices and not just understand it intellectually.

As part of his organising model, Ganz created the Public Narrative Framework based on previous stories used by the leaders of various social movements, and from his own conclusions on the need to tell new public stories. "Through public narrative, social movement leaders – and participants – can move to action by mobilizing sources of motivation, constructing new shared individual and collective identities, and finding the courage to act."



Source : Leading Change Network

The public narrative framework is made up of three components: Story of Self which communicates the values that have called a person to leadership; Story of Us which communicates the values shared by those who are part of the action; Story of Now which communicates an urgent, shared challenge that requires their action now.

It is about formulating a shared story about why we are called to lead, about the society or community we hope to change, why we are united, and why we have to act now. By creating a story that bridges the self, the us and the now, organisers create the necessary trust, solidarity and clarity within their groups for them to act.

## Building relationships

Organising begins with people and relationships that are rooted in shared values and experiences, and are based on strong mutual engagement. An exchange becomes a relationship only when each party engages and offers their *time* for the mutual work. Relationships also need constant attention and nurturing. When nurtured for over time, they can maintain the motivation of the participants and become a source of continuous learning for the individuals and communities involved in the work.

Effective organising therefore depends on actively building intentional relationships for purposeful actions. The 1:1 meeting is a practical method for leaders in a campaign to establish, develop and maintain such relationships. There are three types of 1:1 meetings.

- **Recruitment:** Meetings that take place at the beginning of a relationship between you and a new potential organiser. The goal is to make a personal impression, identify shared experiences and values, and above all stimulate engagement so that the person decides to participate in the campaign. Use your own personal story to identify and assess the other party's interest and potential. Look for shared experiences and values, and then take the next step to get the person to commit on the basis of what you have talked about. Consider the person's ability, skills and contacts when assessing how you can best engage the person in the campaign work.
- **Maintenance:** These meetings should be regular between you and your organisers, for example every two weeks. These are opportunities to catch up on a personal level, to report on the latest actions taken by the organiser and their team, and to offer coaching. Coaching is central to leadership development; the goal is to enable people to find solutions to the challenges they face themselves and to grow with the task.
- **Escalation:** These meetings are for people who are ready to take the next step and take more responsibility in the party's work. It is important here to start instilling confidence in the person you are talking to and pointing out what they have achieved so far, or what valuable expertise the person possesses, and how the campaign and the party would benefit from the person assuming greater responsibility as a leader. If everything goes as planned and the person accepts, take the time to clearly specify the responsibilities and expectations for the new role.



## TIPS FOR RECRUITING, ACTIVATING, AND MAINTAINING PEOPLE'S ENGAGEMENT

**Using good methods can increase the rate at which new people join a campaign, the extent to which they engage, and how long they stay:**

- Don't be apologetic. Organising for something important is an opportunity, not a service. Be enthusiastic when you ask for a commitment.
- Always follow up on a contact: When someone offers to get more involved, ask for their contact details and give them yours. Follow up as soon as possible, preferably within 48 hours.
- Always plan when and where you will next meet. Let no one leave a meeting without asking when they will return.
- Confirm an agreement and make sure everyone understands that you are counting on them.
- Plan for no-shows. Assume that half of the participants will not come. For example, if you need four people for a successful activity, plan for eight.
- Design meaningful activities that are engaging and fun to participate in.

**When you ask someone to make a commitment – for example, to participate in an activity or take on a new role – it is important to do it effectively. This is what Marshall Ganz calls a 'hard ask'. It is a question that results in a concrete commitment to a specific action:**

- Ask questions in a concise, clear and specific way. "Can you come to our team meeting next Wednesday at 6 pm at Anna's home?"
- Do not ask them to commit to anything general and unspecified; instead, have a specific activity or role in mind. If it is an activity, specify the date, time and location.
- Communicate how important it is: Describe an important problem and how the person you are asking is the solution to that problem.
- It is inevitable that the answer will sometimes be 'no'. There are three types of 'no' that you will encounter: 'not now', 'not that' and 'not ever'. This will help you assess how you should proceed to engage this person.

**When we organise, it is up to us to create welcoming and engaging activities that participants appreciate and want to come back to. The following is a list of the main reasons why people do not return:**

- They do not think it is worth their time.
- Activities are perceived as disorganised and people do not feel they get any attention or guidance.
- No one has explained why and how the work they do is important.
- They are uncomfortable doing what they have been asked to do or feel overwhelmed by all the tasks and goals.
- The atmosphere does not feel welcoming or no one recognises their contribution.
- Nobody asked them...





## Structuring teams

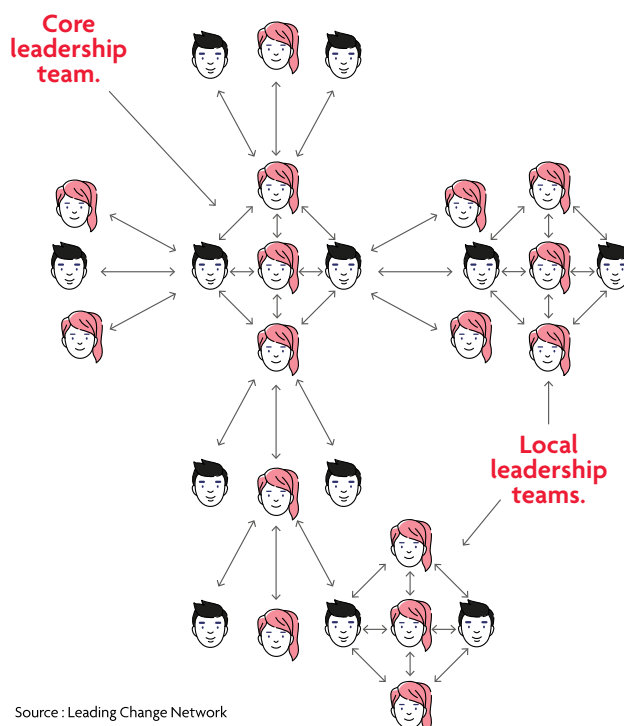
Working in teams is crucial to organising according to the snowflake model. This will enable you to achieve significantly better results by utilising all the resources that all participants bring to the joint work. Team members can also offer each other support and practical guidance, which plays a major role in your organising's leadership development. By working in teams, strong relationships are also developed that facilitate and deepen the participants' commitment to act. In fact, working in teams forms the basis of the snowflake model and is the basis of how to create structures that distribute responsibility and develop leadership and which can grow. The strong relationships in and between teams are the glue that holds the snowflake together.

**Distributed leadership with core and local leadership teams:** In the snowflake model, decision-making is decentralised where possible. A core leadership team ensures that the entire organisation in the snowflake is coherent and is pulling in the same direction towards long-term goals. Local leadership teams ensure that the organisation is flexible and delivers short-term goals efficiently. Everyone is responsible for contributing to and clarifying the strategy for their mission, for their resources, and for continuously working on their learning as well as for identifying and developing new leaders. The core leadership team designs the overall strategy, while the local leadership team tests it on the ground. They adapt it locally and provide ongoing feedback into the snowflake to improve the overall strategy.

**A sustainable number of relationships:** Each person should maintain a sustainable number of relationships. Although each member is likely to interact with many more people in their organising activities, it is important for each person to maintain close relationships with those who are part of their own team (regular team meetings and 1:1 meetings). A rule of thumb is ten relationships for those who are enga-

ged full-time 40 hours a week), and five relationships for those who are part-time.

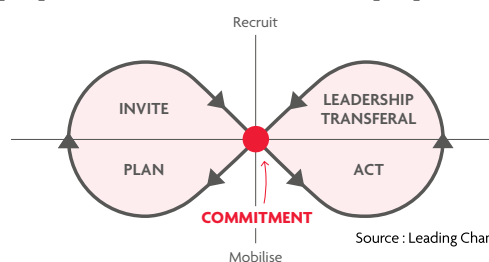
**Mutual accountability:** Note how in the diagram the arrows point in both directions. The model does not function as a hierarchy with bosses who delegate tasks from top to bottom and expect results. Instead the teams are accountable to each other and provide each other with support. Someone within a core leadership team can assign a task to a local leadership team, but someone within a local leadership team can do the same in relation to a core leadership team.



Source : Leading Change Network

**Clearly defined roles and responsibilities:** Each individual in a team has a specific role with clearly defined responsibilities. Roles may vary depending on strategy and tactics (for example, in an election campaign, roles may include a person responsible for door-to-door canvassing, for the phone campaign, for data and follow-up, and a team leader).

**Capacity for exponential growth:** Since leadership in the snowflake model is distributed among many small teams, and since the model is based on growth in leadership the model has capacity for exponential growth. A team connects a number of people, and these people in turn form their own teams, which form new teams, and so on. As a result, it can take three months to grow from five to 25 people, but over the next three months you can grow to 125 people and three months later 625 people, and so on.



Source : Leading Change Network

## FACTS

### EFFECTIVE TEAMS HAVE THREE PARTS IN COMMON

**Clearly shared purpose:** It must be clear why the team is there. What it has been created to achieve and who (constituency) it will do this with. Its purpose should not only be easy to understand, it must also feel challenging and important. It should also be measurable to make it possible to measure progress regularly.

**Mutually dependent roles:** Each team member must have responsibility, or a job of their own that contributes to greater goals. In an effective team, no one works in a silo; there is diversity of perceptions, experiences and opinions that contribute to the team's outcomes.

**Explicit shared standards:** The team should make it clear how it is to be managed and function. How should meetings and activities be conducted, how should decisions be made, and how should people relate to each other? ■

However, the path from being an interested supporter to becoming an organiser has a number of steps. It goes via the recruitment, testing and appointment of a supporter to roles that require increasing levels of commitment and knowledge. To grow and take on greater leadership responsibilities, you must demonstrate that you have the ability to perform each new position's tasks. It is the organiser's job to identify and develop leadership in others. This process may involve several steps:

- **Supporter:** A person who supports the campaign in some way, for example by adding their name to lists on social media.
- **Volunteer prospect:** A supporter registers on a website to actively participate in the campaign. The organiser then invites them to a volunteer event within 48 hours.
- **Team member:** The supporter will now join in on a team activity (such as a meeting or door-to-door canvassing) and become a member of the team. The organiser schedules the new team member to come to another activity or schedules a 1:1 recruitment meeting.
- **Leadership prospect:** The team member starts to take clearer responsibility. The organiser plans a 1:1 escalation meeting to ask the team member to take on a leading role.
- **Organiser:** The person is now ready to be an organiser.

*“Developing leadership requires structuring the work of the organization so it affords as many people as possible the opportunity to learn to lead.”*

Marshall Ganz

Teams are also not created as perfect and fully fledged units from the start. Instead they go through different phases of growth and development:

**Phase 1 – Potential:** Some engaged volunteers want to do more and the goal is to develop and get this potential team to phase 2 as soon as possible. To achieve this, the organiser will network and recruit within the community and hold 1:1 meetings with potential team members.

**Phase 2 – Team Formation:** The team now has a local team leader (for example a community organiser) but no other organisers. During this phase, the team leader must start recruiting more team members and start moving them up the engagement and responsibility ladder until they become organisers as well.

**Phase 3 – Team:** The team has one team leader and at least one other organiser. Now the team is official and it must

continue to grow and develop to increase its potential. The more people who attend events and join the team, the more the team grows as they are tested, recruited and trained. The challenge in this phase is to grow sustainably, that is, without growing too quickly and neglecting members of the existing team.

**Phase 4 – Developed Team:** At this stage, the team is efficient and well established. It has at least four core organisers, including the team leader. If the team completes its leadership development work, it will grow into an increasingly large and even more efficient snowflake branch over time.

**Phase 5 – Team Transformation:** The team has grown to its full potential and can now contribute to other teams. Current team members who are organisers can start new teams in other suburbs or regions. The teams can be split into two, half of whom start working in a new area to start a team there and continue to develop this part of the snowflake.

## Designing strategy

To design your strategies and act locally, you need to ask three basic questions: Who are our people? What is the problem? What is our goal?

**Step 1: Who are our people?** When you design your local strategy, you first need to base it on different groups. The first is your constituency and the leadership and the supporters that exist in it. The constituents are those who have a need to organise themselves and who will also contribute leadership in order to do so. The task of an organiser is to turn a community of people who share common values or interests into a constituency – people who have committed themselves to working for these shared values or interests together. As we have seen before, this is made possible by activating the local leadership that is in the area.

It is also important here to get a picture of what other people and organisations there are in the area whose interests are not directly affected initially but who may have an interest in supporting you. It is also important to have a clear picture of which other actors or competitors work in the community and which actual opponents you will face in this work. In the case of other actors or competitors, the goal is primarily to seek to cooperate with them; in the case of opponents, it is good to consider how they will react to your organising and how you can respond to neutralise their countermeasures. Sometimes opponents only show themselves clearly when the campaign has started and started to have an impact.

**Step 2: What is the problem?** As we saw earlier, it is the people in the area who define this themselves. It is important here to look at the history of the problem to understand what has been tried and what has failed in the past. Why has the problem not been resolved before? Who or which

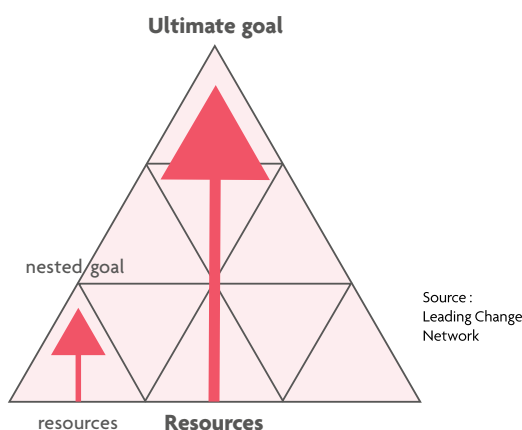
actors have the resources to solve the problem? Why have they not used them? Do we really know how to solve it, but simply lack the necessary resources? Or do we first have to find out how we can solve the problem?

To determine how to solve the problem, you then develop a 'change theory'. In community organising, this analysis is based on relative strengths of different power groups, and in this context power is not something you have because of a formal position in an organisational hierarchy. Instead, this power is understood as the influence created by the relationship between interests and resources. It is assumed that the world is the way it is because some people benefit from how it is. It is also assumed that these people have more power and can therefore maintain the current order. The analysis therefore focuses on who has power, who does not, and how to build enough power to change the current power situation. Five fundamental questions are asked when deciding on the strategic goal of this work:

- 1 What change are we seeking?
- 2 Who has the resources to bring about this change?
- 3 What do they want?
- 4 What resources do we have that they want or need?
- 5 How could we organise these resources to give us enough power to get what we want?

**Step 3: What is our goal?** The strategic goal is the most important choice when designing a campaign strategy. To start using your resources, you have to decide where to focus. You have to ask yourself: what goal can we start working towards which may not solve the whole problem, but will we get us a good way down the road to solving the problem?

In the snowflake model, the strategy is nested; the ultimate goal of a campaign is rarely achieved in one attempt. It is a gradual process. Instead of chasing a big ultimate goal, it is better to set clear smaller goals towards reaching it. Nested goals can be achieved over time. For example, a local campaign for more municipal housing can start by getting candidates who support this to first be elected before proceeding to pushing for an actual decision on the matter in the Municipal Council.



## FACTS

### AN EFFECTIVE AND STRATEGIC GOAL

1. Is **measurable**, ideally as a number with units (e.g. people, votes, hours, money, etc.).
2. **Focuses resources** on a single strategic outcome.
3. **Builds the capacity** of your constituency.
4. **Uses a point of leverage**: your constituency's strength and your opposition's weakness.
5. Focuses on a **motivational issue** that is visible and significant to your constituency.
6. Can be **replicated or emulated**.

Things to consider – who are our people? What is our problem? And what is our goal? – is central to effective community organising. Once you understand the type of power you need to build and have a measurable strategic goal in mind, you can develop your change theory, which summarises the strategy. It is a tool for understanding and communicating your strategy. It uses this format:

- If we do (TACTICS)
- then (STRATEGIC GOAL or CHANGE)
- Because (REASON)

It should be clear for both large and small scales (for example large scale at national level or small scale at local level in election campaigns). A single campaign may have many local change theories encapsulated in a broader campaign.

### Action

This is about translating the strategy into measurable, motivational, and effective action. A tactic is most effective when it meets the following criteria:

- **Strategic**: it results in concrete, measurable progress towards your campaign goals.
- **Strengthens your organisation**: it attracts and engages new people; it increases your community's capacity to work together and bring about change.
- **Develops individuals**: it builds leadership, skills and capacity in your constituency.

To be able to effectively engage people to act, you need their engagement. Therefore, to successfully engage others in a way that boosts rather than drains your resources, you must consciously design activities to increase this engagement in the right way. Once people have chosen to join, it is important that they get a meaningful experience. If people do not feel that what they are doing is important, or if they are not growing and learning, they are unlikely to say yes the next time you ask for a commitment. There are three

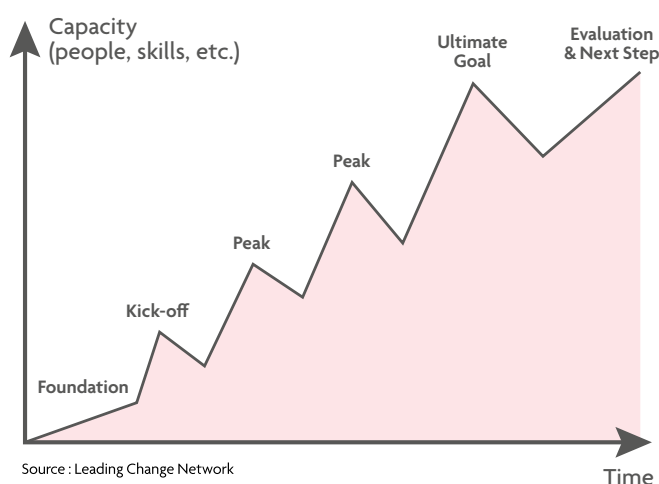


characteristics of motivational actions that lead to greater engagement and higher quality:

- 1 **Meaningfulness:** participants can easily understand and see that the action is important and makes a big difference in achieving the common goal.
- 2 **Autonomy:** people are given responsibility in accordance with their skills and capabilities to achieve a certain outcome.
- 3 **Feedback and learning:** people can clearly see the results of their work, measure their success, and get coaching and support from more experienced leaders to continue learning and growing.

When designing and delegating tasks, the key is to engage people in a way that facilitates these experiences for those who participate.

### Campaign timeline:



The growth and rhythm of the organising then becomes the campaign itself. Campaigns develop over time with a rhythm that initially slowly lays a foundation, and then gradually gathers momentum when you reach different milestones and peaks, finally culminating in a climax when a campaign is won or lost. When organising, it is assumed that there are far fewer resources than are needed to achieve the campaign's ultimate goal.

The ability to increase capacity is crucial to success. This capacity-building is also what generates momentum in itself. Like a snowball, each success contributes resources, making the next success more achievable. Therefore, when you map out your campaign, it is important to identify milestones to support this build-up of energy.

Read more about the snowflake model and its five basic leadership exercises in Marshall Ganz and the Leading Change Network's publication 'Organizing: People, Power, Change', which is available online. This publication also contains practical exercises linked to the different methods of the working model.

## ORGANISING SENTENCE

An organising sentence summarises the campaign and offers clarity on your people, strategy, tactics and timeline. Every team in a campaign should put together an organising sentence unique to their own team:

**We are organising (WHO) to (WHAT OUTCOME) through (HOW) by (WHEN). Or, put another way: We are organising (our people) to (strategic goal) through (tactics) by (timeline).**

For example, in a national election, a core leadership team's organising sentence may look like this:

**We are organising the Social Democratic Party members and other supporters to identify 1 million voters who will pledge to vote social democrat through door-to-door and phone canvassing by 14 September 2022.**

Similarly, a local leadership team's organising sentence in a local election may look like this:

**We are organising the Social Democratic Party members and other supporters in the city of Borlänge to identify 15,000 voters who will pledge to vote social democrat through door-to-door and phone canvassing by 14 September 2022.**

## Starting up a local branch

Community organising as per the snowflake model is an effective way of recruiting members and becoming well established in an area. Once a number of particularly engaged party members have come together to take the step to start a local branch, they first clear the plan with the overall level of the party's organisational structure if that level of the party is not already involved in this initiative. Different parties have different rules for when is the right time to start a new party branch. For example, this may depend on there not being an existing local branch of the party in the area, or the number of members in another local branch having reached a limit that is set internally and a new local branch needing to be formed.

The next step will then be to call all the members in the area to a special meeting to formally establish the new local branch. At this meeting, decisions are made on what it should be called and in which area it should operate. The meeting also elects an executive to represent the members and decides who will audit the operation and its accounts. The best way to ensure that all the necessary decisions are made is to have an agenda that includes these items. The signed minutes should then be sent to the regional party organisation to approve the affiliation of the new local branch to the party. Different countries also have different legal requirements. In some cases, for example, it may be necessary to register the organisation in the city or town.

Read more about how the constituent meeting is held in Module 1; Formation and structure.

## The tasks of the new executive

Members delegate certain powers to the executive. There are a number of tasks that it would be impractical to try to manage at members meetings. The main roles of an executive must be clearly defined in the party's constitution. The constitution often establishes that a Chair, a Secretary and a Treasurer should be elected. In addition, an executive normally consists of between five and ten members and a number of substitutes. After the meeting at which the executive is elected, it needs to begin its work by rapidly constituting itself. This involves deciding who will do what in the positions that have not already been filled in the election process. For example, this may involve deciding who should be the education officer or who should be the membership officer.

The most important thing to bear in mind when a new executive takes office is that the executive is a team. You are doing this together, belong to the same party and are all driven by the ambition to do your best based on the mandate you have received from the members. Consequently, it can also be to useful start the work of the executive by getting to know one another properly.

One of the executive's main overall tasks is to provide political leadership for the party organisation it leads. The executive is to keep itself informed about political developments in the country, region and municipality, as well as trends in the political conversation in other sections of the party. This enables the executive to regularly discuss and formulate strategy for its level of the party organisation, as well as its priorities and activities in general, and to involve the members in these discussions and decisions. The executive's mission is to lead the practical work and some of its tasks during the year are:

- Implement decisions made
- Make its own decisions on issues as they arise
- Keeping members informed
- Prepare for members meetings
- Represent the organisation in public
- Manage the party's assets

One of the executive's main tasks is also to always ensure that the party organisation has the most serviceable and strongest organisation possible. This includes the organisation's capacity to recruit, organise and engage its members, to get its messages across through its communication channels with the wider community and in campaigns, to fundraise, and to develop policies effectively. The executive also has a special responsibility for ensuring that the party organisation's continued local recruitment processes and educational activities work well so that there is a wide range of skilled members who can participate in the party's

activities and take on future positions of trust – in the party and for the party in elected assemblies. Read more about the executive's work in Module 2; Holding elections and reaching decisions.

## Getting started

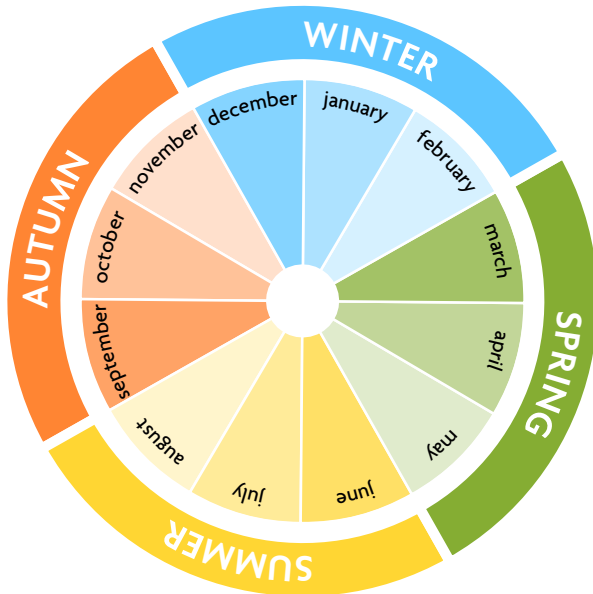
The executive then plays a key role in working with the members to ensure that local operations are started and function well. After formation and affiliation to the party, an important role is assumed, as the driving force for the party's policies and activities, at local level by:

- **Developing policies** – developing policy locally and contributing to the development of regional and national policies.
- **Shaping opinion** – promoting the party's policies and ideas locally through active advocacy and campaign work.
- **Standing as a candidate** – standing in elections with members representing the party in local elected assemblies.
- **Conducting election campaigns** – communication with voters and active election campaign work locally with special responsibility for involving members in the party's election work.

The local branch is the base of the party which organises the parties members in its work on a practical level. This means regularly offering opportunities to participate actively in the party's decision-making processes and activities during the year. Activities include regular members meetings, study activities, outreach events, and also more social activities just for fun. As with any organisation, the relationships in the group are what keeps it together and facilitates working together.



Year wheel



The goal is to create a strong, inclusive, democratic team, for the members and by the members, with high membership value. In addition, there are more formal steps that need to be taken over a year, such as the annual meeting, drawing up lists of candidates and the submission of motions to the party's District or National Conference. It is therefore a good idea to plan activities in good time and present them clearly to members, for example using a year wheel that creates a simple overview of the organisation's year.

The tasks of the local branch also include working purposefully to strengthen the party organisation in its area. This mainly means:

- **Membership development** – member recruitment, member introduction and member care.
- **Capacity and skills development** – educational activities for the development of members and elected representatives.

These are the areas we will look at in the coming parts.

Finally, as we have stated before, policies, campaigns and organisation are all important, interacting elements of successful organising. Sometimes parties see policy development, membership development and advocacy as separate things. That is the wrong way to look at it; they are closely interrelated, and need to be so at grassroots level in particular for local organising to get off the ground and be effective. Initially, it is therefore important that the new party organisation creates a clear political agenda and sets challenging political and organisational goals. And conduct an active campaign to establish themselves and grow from there. Via social media, events and canvassing, to be noticed and build relationships. In short, it is important to reach out and be visible. To identify problems in consultation with their communities and build winning campaigns on issues that are crucial to the local people. Ultimately, the bread and butter of political organising is: Choose an issue and change something.







## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Why is organising people and their engagement more important to certain types of political party than others?
- What are the practical advantages enjoyed by a party that recruits many members and is able to support and motivate them to participate actively in politics?
- What role does parties' local organising and presence play in the activities and strengths of parties? What happens to a party that has no strong local roots?
- What is our own party's local presence like? Where and in which groups do we need to grow?
  
- What is the difference between the methods of local establishment today and how this was done in the past? What new opportunities and challenges are there?
- How do you organise people, summarised in a couple of sentences? What are the most basic steps?
- Why should politics, advocacy and organising always go hand in hand with the party's organising efforts?
- What role do leadership and relationships play in organising? Why?
  
- What is community organising? What are the benefits of this approach when you want to grow and become established locally?
- What is the first question a community organiser asks themselves? Why?
- Community organising and its field campaigns require a good organisation. How does the 'snowflake' model contribute to this?
- A key aspect of this model is teamwork. Why is this so effective?
  
- What role do stories play in organising and what does a good, shared story look like?
- What is the role of leadership development and relationship building in the snowflake model? What tools are available for working in a structured way?
- What steps are important when drawing up strategies to act locally? How do you formulate a change strategy?
- What should you consider when setting your strategic goals? What are the benefits of nested goals in organising efforts overall?
- How do you best translate your strategy into motivational and effective action? What are the hallmarks of effective tactics?
  
- The establishment of local campaign teams recruiting activists can also serve as embryos for local branches of the party. What are formal procedures then for creating a new local branch?
- What is the best way to get started? What is the role of the new executive?
- Why is it important for the new local branch to reach out to the community and be visible? What is the best way to do this?



# Membership development and management – recruiting, welcoming and activating

As we have seen, local organising and the local party organisation are central to the party's activities and development, because it is this that organises the members in doing the party's work on a daily basis. The members are the foundation of the party but also its most important resource. Successful and strong parties are able to constantly engage new people in their political mission to grow in organisational strength.

But that mission is not complete just because you succeed in recruiting many new members. It is just as important that these new members are welcomed, included and activated in the local branch. If the members are also engaged and active, the party's policies, communication and organisation will be even stronger.

It should be easy to get involved as a new member, and it should also be rewarding to remain a member for those who are already members. How the day-to-day business of the party operates, the formal decision-making processes and the internal party culture must all work to make this possible. The thresholds to joining the party, participating in the party's work and having an input to its policy, as well

as taking on tasks and roles, should be as low as possible. All of this lies at the heart of meaningful membership and gives membership a clear value to those who want to get politically involved.

In other words, there are many reasons for a party to develop effective strategies and methods for recruiting many new members, as well as for welcoming and activating them. This task can be likened to a chain that has three links, which are the next parts of this chapter:

- 1 Recruit**
- 2 Welcome**
- 3 Activate**

## FACTS

### THE 3.5 PER CENT RULE – WHEN POPULAR MOVEMENTS ENSURE FUNDAMENTAL POLITICAL CHANGE

*Erica Chenoweth, Professor of Public Policy at Harvard Kennedy School, has compared hundreds of political movements over the last hundred years and found that those that use non-violent means to achieve their aims have twice as much chance of achieving their goals as violent movements. In her research she has also shown that for fundamental political change to take place, about 3.5 per cent of the population needs to be actively involved in a political movement. So, the number of active members of a political movement is truly significant.* ■

## Recruit

The first link in the chain is to recruit. Having a common strategy and well-developed methods for recruiting new members is fundamental for a party that wants to grow. Recruitment does not have to be difficult, but there are a few things that it's wise to think about in order to facilitate recruitment and to ensure that you work in a goal-oriented way.

### Prioritise and create a recruitment culture

Initially this is about making recruitment a clear priority. It needs to be high on the agenda and permeate all levels of the party, from the members of the local branch all the way up to the level of the Party Executive. It needs to be constantly communicated internally: It should be clear to each member that recruitment is something that is highly regarded and fundamental to the party's political work. At the party's regular Party Executive and members meetings, there should be a standing item on the agenda concerning progress in the party organisation's recruitment and organising efforts, as there need to be specially appointed individuals in the Party Executive who are responsible for membership development.

Successful recruitment efforts, and members who have distinguished themselves in doing this, should also be recognised and highlighted as positive examples to inspire other members. The internal party culture should clearly indicate that recruitment is valued because it helps to make the party grow and become stronger. The party's leaders at all levels must regularly emphasise that recruitment is a natural and central activity every time the party holds outreach events or activities. When they and the party members hold these events/activities, they must always aim to recruit new members to the party as well.

### Set clear goals and make strategic choices

In addition, both the Party Executive and the party district and local branch organisations need to set clear goals for

their work. These should be measurable and easy to understand for all members. For example, the goals might be that the Party Executive wants the total number of members to increase by 10,000 over a year. A national goal which is then broken down for each underlying party organisation relative to their current membership numbers. For example, this could mean that a local branch should recruit at least 40 new members during the year. Common and clear goals create clarity and motivation throughout the organisation.

A strategy for which groups to target can be helpful here, and then adapting communications and activities accordingly. These can be groups that you see as being particularly open to membership or in areas and groups where you realise that you need to grow. A party grows stronger and its policies more legitimate when its membership reflects society as a whole. This is particularly true for a broad popular movement party for ordinary people. When the local branch is going to recruit new members, it should therefore also take this into account. Start by looking at your membership structure: What are its weaknesses? For example, are men, the elderly or academics over-represented? How can you reach out to other groups, such as women, young people or families with children?

If the party has the resources, it can also conduct opinion polls in order to be able to understand, identify and adapt its communication and messages to different groups. The important thing is that you have a well thought-out and simple strategy for how to best achieve the goals for your membership development together. Read more about how to work with target groups and strategic communication in Module 4: Reaching Out and Connecting.

### Communicate actively and coherently

It is important to be outgoing and actively communicate based on the strategies and objectives of the party. It is about being visible and conducting special recruitment campaigns, but also that recruitment should be a natural part of all party campaigns, communication and activities. Recruitment should be linked to everything the party does in its contacts with others, and with its political work. Their values and their willingness to work together with others to effect change are what ultimately make people want to become members. The party's policies, communications and recruitment must always go hand in hand

Recruiting new members should be like a reflex every time the party carries out activities or when party members meet people whom they feel share the party's values. These can also be everyday situations: during lunch break with your colleagues, or at the gym with your buddy. Situations with no stress and where there is already a trusting relationship. Although specific strategies are in place, a broad approach is also necessary. Asking the specific and direct question "wouldn't you like to be a member of our party?" as often and in as many contexts as possible.





### Make use of a variety of activities locally

Recruitment does not have to be boring. On the contrary, the activities can be designed in such a way that members will look forward to them. They can be an opportunity to socialise with party colleagues where they are working together for a common goal, to meet new people and at the same time learn something or just have fun together. Some examples of these kinds of activities are:

- **Door-to-door canvassing:** Walk around a residential area two by two. Knock on doors and ask for a brief chat with the people who live there. After brief conversations on politics, where you have listened to what issues the person thinks is important, and you have presented the party's policies on these issues, you can ask the people if they want to join the party. If they're not ready to commit, ask for an e-mail address or phone number and follow up on your contacts some days later.
- **Public meetings:** Get together for a meeting in your area. Let one of the party's representatives speak on a specific issue that is important to many people in the area. Open up the meeting for discussion, notice who are the most engaged participants in these discussions, and recruit particularly from among these participants after the meeting.
- **Collecting signatures:** Identify an urgent problem that engages many people locally. This could be a school that is going to be closed down, or a street that doesn't have street lighting. Go out into the area and collect signatures to solve the problem, and take the opportunity to ask about membership of the party.
- **Attend cultural or sporting events:** Be at music festivals, markets, and sports events. These are places where many people gather at the same time. They are there to enjoy themselves and so are not in a hurry, or on their way somewhere else. This can make it an excellent opportunity to have many good conversations with people.



### CONDUCTING A RECRUITMENT CONVERSATION

Key in the recruitment process is being able to be sympathetic and understand the person you are trying to recruit. The more you understand the person's life situation, the easier it will be to identify social problems that they perceive as being of concern, and to present the party's policy to solve them. It is important to have both an inclusive conversation and an inclusive body language.

To ask questions such as: "**What are the issues that are particularly important to you?**" or "**Do you think this is a problem?**" can be very helpful as it makes it easier to adapt the conversation to what is important to the person.

An inclusive body language means that you seek eye contact with the person and make sure that there are no objects between you. **For example, if you are standing at an information table, it is better to stand in front of the table than to keep the table between you and the person you are talking to.** Otherwise, a physical barrier is created that may hinder an inclusive conversation.

If you listen to the person and try to understand their life situation, it will be easier to choose what policy on a concrete issue you include in the conversation. If the person is unemployed, for example, it is appropriate to talk about the party's initiatives to create jobs. If it is a young person who says that it wants to move out of home, it is perhaps appropriate to talk about the party's housing policy. It is just as important to always listen and respect a 'no'. If the person is clear that they do not want to join the party, then just accept that. The same applies if the person's values are far from that of the party. It is better to thank them for the conversation and focus on the next person.

It is also important to be open to people who are interested in membership for other reasons. While some may be passionate about a specific issue and want to be able to make a difference with regard to this issue, others may be more interested in the social aspect of party membership. A single pensioner might see it as an opportunity for more social interaction. It is also important to inform people about activities and regular operations in addition to presenting the party's policies.

**Here are a few simple steps that you can base your recruitment conversation around:**

- 1 **Listen** – ask questions and show interest
- 2 **Acknowledge** – concentrate on what unites you
- 3 **Reinforce** – create a sense of belonging and clarity
- 4 **Recruit** – ask the clear question about membership ■

- **Workplace union meeting:** Arrange a meeting with the local union to discuss a specific problem in the workplace. Take the opportunity to recruit colleagues who come to the meeting.
- **Evening get-togethers:** Organise a gathering where you invite all members to bring a friend who is not a member. Have music, snacks and drinks at the gathering, talk politics and have a pleasant evening.
- **Lecture or film presentation:** Arrange a lecture with an expert or show a current film about an urgent issue. Promote the event through social media and posters in the area. Take this opportunity to discuss and inform the audience about the party's policy on the matter.
- **Walk with a politician:** Invite people in your area to take a walk with a local politician where the person can present their views on the needs for improvement in their area.
- **Barbecue in the park:** Organise a barbecue on a pleasant summer evening in a local park. Offer hot dogs and drinks, and talk about politics in a relaxed way with the people who show up.
- **Recruitment by phone from home:** Meet up at the home of another member and phone up people to recruit them to the party. When everyone on the list has been called, you can have dinner together.
- **Online activities:** Participate in discussions in different groups or have Q & A sessions in the form of live videos with senior party representatives where people have the opportunity to ask questions. Also follow up on all the likes and positive comments on the party's social media accounts.

## Work strategically with the party's contacts

Today there is great potential to connect with and recruit new members via social media. All online campaigns, as well as all communications activities that the party carries out, are ultimately about establishing contact, influencing and building relationships with people – with the aim of developing these relationships into actual collaboration and thereby helping to strengthen the party. For example, encouraging people to discuss the party's policies online, campaign online and share the party's posts on social media. But online campaigns should also mobilise these online contacts to participate in offline actions, such as participating in local campaigning, attending a meeting, and ultimately taking the step to becoming a member.

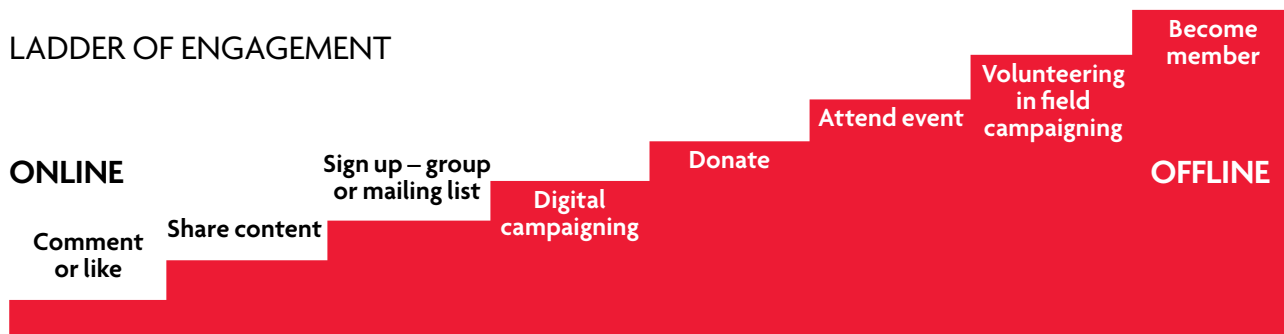
A common way to coordinate and activate people to start getting involved is to bring together and maintain contact with groups on social media or via e-mail, where the party can spread targeted information using e-mailing lists and invite curious sympathisers to various activities. That is why it is important to keep on collecting e-mail addresses, both online and offline in order to reach and engage new sympathisers and potential members. This can be done continuously by:

- Steering traffic to the landing pages of various campaigns or forms on the party's website and getting visitors to sign up to get more information or to perform some activity.
- Collecting e-mail addresses from the contacts you get through canvassing and at events.

If you work systematically with this, you can quite quickly establish mailing lists to tailor communication and process different key groups that you want to engage and recruit.



## LADDER OF ENGAGEMENT



### Ladder of engagement

Engagement can be many different things. What we call the ladder of engagement shows some of the fundamental levels.

The point of using a ladder as a symbol of engagement is that it is rare for people to step straight into one of the upper steps or become active members immediately. Most begin with a smaller commitment. With the right communication and the opportunities to get involved, the party can get people to take one or more steps up. This is about offering people at every step the opportunity to take another step and become a bit more involved. Not everyone will. But if they do not see a clear opening or get a positive invitation to do so, there is a great risk that they will not move forward from the first step. So the basic rule is: Always ask them to do a bit more. Show why this is crucial for one of the issues the party is pursuing. The information needs to be targeted to them in a simple and concrete way, where each activity has a clear time and place. It needs to be clear how to respond positively to the suggestion.

### CRM – more than a contacts database

An easy way to coordinate and connect the party's contacts both online and offline – and to systematically work towards gradually increasing the engagement of sympathisers and people who are curious about the party towards becoming members – is to use a simple CRM system. CRM is a concept that comes from the business world and refers to a database for Customer Relationship Management. In political parties we usually talk instead of Constituent Relationship Management. CRM helps the party with its administration, organising and management of its relationships with those outside the party. CRM is not just software or a contacts database, but rather a process that influences the party's organising activities which are intended to lead to deeper engagement and relationships with the party's members, sympathisers and other target groups.

In the CRM system, you have all the party's contacts. In particular the contact details of members, sympathisers who have signed up in some context, or citizens who are curious about the party and who want more information. The system also contains information about the contacts they have had with the party, what information they have received, and what level of activity in relation to the party

each individual is at. This information can then be segmented in different ways and, based on criteria specified by the individuals themselves, such as place of residence, age or what policy areas they are interested in. This helps the party to direct e-mails and other information in a relevant and purposeful way to them. You can also build automatic systems for when different people and groups receive a certain type of information in order to help them take a further step up the ladder of engagement. For example, when someone participates in a campaign, it can be followed up with an automatic e-mail inviting the person to take the step of becoming a member.



## Welcome

The second step in the membership recruitment chain is to welcome and take good care of those who have been recruited. In order for the party to grow long term, not only do you need new members to join, they must also feel appreciated and want to remain. A key step is welcoming all new members into the party in a way that is positive and gives them a good introduction.

As we saw before, the reasons for joining a party can vary from person to person, but most people share a desire to be politically engaged. Some may want to pursue a specific policy issue, others might want to participate in a certain type of activity, while some mainly want to develop their knowledge and skills. There are also those who have mainly joined for the social aspect and to get to know new people.



There is often a combination of reasons why people choose to become a member. Regardless of what these reasons are, new members should feel welcome and included in the local branch, and to achieve this there are a few things that can be useful for the local branch to think about:

- **Listen actively:** Find out why they chose to join the party. What are their expectations and needs? This will make it easier to offer a range of opportunities to satisfy these expectations and needs, and to identify an area where the new member can be particularly active.
- **Have clear procedures and responsibilities:** You need to know in advance who is responsible for what when a new member is going to be welcomed. Some of these tasks might be:
  - The chair or the membership officer in the executive calls up new members to make them feel welcome and notes their personal reasons for choosing to join the party. The call should be made within one week at the latest of a new member joining the party, and a follow-up call can then be made after six months to ask about how things have gone.
  - The person who recruited the new member can bring them to the first local members meeting, and a mentor can then be appointed to support the new member and explain the party's policies, internal decision-making processes and the activities of the local branch.
  - The local branch's education officer is responsible for providing information on opportunities to participate in the party's educational activities.
- **Ensure an inclusive climate for discussions:** At each meeting where there are new members, it is important to start with a presentation round – to inform about who is doing what, but also to put names to any new faces and give everyone an initial opportunity to get to know their new fellow party members. Briefly present something about yourselves as individuals and about your formal roles, along with how long you have been involved in the party, why you joined and so on.
- **Offer member training:** Educational activities and courses are effective ways to introduce new members and help them to build their own networks and relationships in the party. These should be offered to new members as soon as possible, but at the latest within six months. The courses can be run at the local branch or district level and are intended to introduce new members to the party so that they become more familiar with the party's ideology, policy platforms and organisation.

- **Explain and support:** There is often an internal culture and jargon used between people who have been members for a long time that can be experienced by new members as rather difficult to understand and a bit exclusionary. The same applies to specific political terms and concepts. It is important not to assume that everyone automatically knows what these terms mean, but instead try to support and explain terms, processes and policy areas in a way that is easy to understand. The party needs to be open and welcoming to new members regardless of their profiles and backgrounds.

- **Adapt to the member's life situation:** It should be as easy as possible to join the party and become active in its local branch. It is therefore important to try to adapt meetings and activities to people who, for various reasons, have a different life situation from the majority of members. For example parents of young children who cannot organise babysitting. You will then need to accept that the children being present at members meetings. In which case it's a good idea to have some toys, drawing pads and crayons available. Another example is people with disabilities, in which case you will need to adapt the premises or procedures at the meeting accordingly. Factors such as those just mentioned should never be an obstacle to political engagement.

Basically, as in any new social situation, it is important for people to feel seen, appreciated and needed. Generally, everyone involved has busy lives and limited time and a lot to keep track of. So it's good to have simple routines and clear responsibilities for how to introduce new members. The process starts immediately when the new member applies the membership and then proceeds step-by-step. This 'welcome chain' is also something that can be usefully combined with the party's membership and CRM system if you are using one. With this kind of system, a welcome e-mail can be sent automatically when a new member signs up on the website or is registered in another way, and another e-mail can be sent automatically with information about the new member to the local chair, membership and education officers. They can then take the step of actively and verbally inviting the new member to local activities and to the new member's first members meeting.

It is also important to have simple rules regarding responsibility for the different organisational levels of the party and who is responsible for what in member development. Basically, however, it is always the local branch that 'owns' its new members, and thus has the principal responsibility for incorporating new members into the party. However, the district and national party levels may need to assist and coordinate contacts with members so that the party's activities and communication remain consistent.

# Activate

The third and final step in the chain consists of activating the new member. This is about getting new members who have been welcomed to become active in the party and ensuring that those who are already active continue to be active. The local branch needs to maintain and develop the commitment and energy of its members. Its activities should meet the expectations of the membership. The key to generating the value of membership and sustaining it is to utilise members' engagement and competencies. They must feel appreciated, listened to, and feel that they can influence policy and the party's activities, and that they have permission to develop as members. The value of membership can be summarised by these three criteria. If they can be met, membership of the party will have high value for members:

- 1 **Opportunities for influence:** By listening in on policy debates at meetings where decisions are made. By being able to participate actively in the development of party policy in various working groups, through advocacy and representing the party on important issues. As well as by writing motions for submission to the National Conference, or holding various positions of trust. It is ultimately a question of what a member can do and offer to feel truly a member who is making a difference in the development of the party and society as a whole.
- 2 **Access to information and being able to develop their knowledge:** By being included and receiving regular information updates (for example through meetings, newsletters and social media) about the activities of the party and the local branch. This is also about getting the opportunity to attend training courses in organisation and policy organised by the party, as well as growing as an individual through taking on more responsibilities.
- 3 **Being part of a community:** Through socialising and various activities where members meet and spend time with each other in an inclusive and warmly welcoming atmosphere.

These three criteria should function as a checklist for the local branch when it is planning and implementing its activities. If the activities of the local branch meet these three criteria, they will be creating a solid foundation for membership have a high value for its members. This makes it easier to maintain a high level of energy and activity and to maintain the engagement of members. A simple method to ensure that these criteria are met is that each individual activity planned ticks as many of them as possible.

Sometimes it may be easier to meet these criteria if you think a bit 'outside the box'. For example, by locating activities in other, more open and public places than the usual party venue. Another way is to interact with other local branches, associated organisations or trade unions. This can expand the community aspect of membership to include more



people, while members get new insights and perspectives from people they normally would not meet. Here are some tips on activities that can increase the value of membership:

- **Local action program:** Identify what you want to achieve politically and present this in a clear and accessible document. The document sets out the direction for the financial year and can attract new members to the organisation as well as increase the engagement of those who are already members. As a recruitment strategy, the program can be designed as a dialogue with citizens in the area through door-to-door canvassing. This gives them the opportunity to continue to influence activities if they also join as members.
- **Open working groups:** Establish working groups based on specific issues involving new and old members based on their interests and level of engagement. The working groups are then given the task of developing policies in this area and also planning activities related to working with these policies.
- **Campaigns:** Door-to-door canvassing, demonstrations and campaigns on social media to spread the party's message, conversed with citizens and recruit more members.
- **Advocacy:** Write op-eds for newspapers and social media posts. Hold debates with political opponents and organise petitions for a local issue. Conduct local opinion polls on issues, and write letters to those in power.
- **Training:** Hold courses, seminars, guest lectures, workshops, study visits and workshops to enable members to deepen their knowledge and improve their skills. It is a good idea to coordinate this with the policy issues that the party has prioritised and is working with during the year.
- **Socialising:** All of the above points are based on working closely together. But it is also good to organise get-togethers after work at a pub or café, a barbecue or a picnic in a park, or a party at the home of one of the members. After another activity or by itself just to have a pleasant time together. This will strengthen relationships in the group, and many good suggestions and ideas about the party's activities in general will come out of these discussions.

## FACTS

### PEOPLE'S ENGAGEMENT DEEPENS STEPWISE

Based on the ladder of engagement, a member's personal journey from being an interested citizen who is not yet a member to being ready to take on a clearer leadership role in the party can take five general steps:



In order for the party to reach its potential and function well, it is important that there is a link between each of these steps and that they work as intended. To advance a step, you need clear methods and guidance from other members. It is therefore important to maintain a membership development out-

look, and to work on the basis of that outlook. In order to move up the ladder, the member needs to feel that they can have an influence, have the opportunity to develop their knowledge, and feel a sense of belonging and security in being part of the party. ■

### Plan actively and open up your activities

Annual planning makes it easier to ensure that there is a balance between different types of activities and that the activities meet the needs and expectations of members in terms of influence, information/knowledge and being part of a community. Planning also makes it clear when and how various activities are to be carried out. To be successful, it is important that the party members themselves are involved in this planning. You can have special meetings to work out the cycle of activities over the course of the year that was presented in the previous section.

In principle, all party activities can be outreach activities and be open to all. Executive meetings can

often be held within the context of members meetings, and members meetings can become public meetings. Meeting at a place other than a party venue is also a way of making the party's activities more accessible and inclusive for new members and those who are curious about the party. Most things will also be more fun with more people involved. It is a great idea to join forces and organise activities with other associations and organisations, and don't forget to actively inform members and citizens about your activities.

If they do not know that you exist or what you are doing, you will find it difficult to make any progress in growing your membership.



### METHOD FOR DEVELOPING LOCAL ACTIVITIES TOGETHER

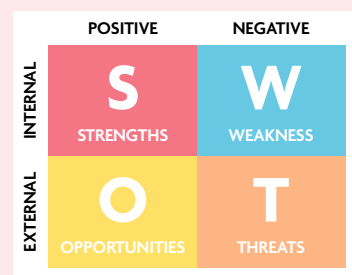
You can analyse your local branch at a members meeting using a simple SWOT analysis. Start by a square on a whiteboard or a large sheet of paper. Divide into quadrants and label each one: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats. Strengths and weaknesses are internal factors that affect how many active members you can have. However, opportunities and threats are external factors that are beyond your control but still affect how many members you have and how active they can be.

Give sticky notes to each member who at the meeting, and ask them to identify at least one factor in each category. Get them to write these down on the sticky notes and attach them in the relevant quadrant. Then let each member explain why they chose to highlight these particular things. Discuss the quadrants one by one after all members have put their sticky notes in place:

- 1** What are our main strengths? How can we make the best use of them?
- 2** What are our main weaknesses? How can we manage, or minimise, the consequences of these?

- 3** What are our main opportunities? How can we make the best use of these to benefit our local branch?
- 4** What are our biggest threats? How can we be prepared for and avoid these?

Each question should lead to at least three concrete conclusions on which you agree. Based on the answers to all these questions, you should then agree on at least five overall and concrete measures to help you grow and become more active as a party. ■





## Membership development – a natural part of community organising

In this chapter, we have highlighted in broad terms the work of membership development in the local branch. We also want to point out that all these parts – how people are recruited, welcomed and activated – are naturally also part of organising in local field campaigns which we focused on in the previous section. Through outreach such as systematic door-to-door canvassing, by actively seeking out sympathisers and identifying activists, and by focusing on questions of concrete policy that are front and centre in people's daily lives, you can reach out and recruit effectively.

In fact, organisations that invest in community organising also recruit more members. Many parties who only conduct field campaigns during election campaigns notice that it is during these periods that they grow their member numbers most. The same applies to the other stages of membership development. In community organising, the welcome to new members and their activation become natural steps as they form part of the work of delegating responsibility, identifying leaders and active policy outreach in their community. There is therefore every reason to take this kind of activity into account when planning your membership development.

## National membership development and member care

Although the local branch bears a big part of the responsibility for the party's membership development, the party at national and district level also has a role to play in prioritising and creating the structures that enable the local branch to recruit, welcome and activate new members. There needs to be clear consistency in the party's membership development and communication as a whole. The party at the central level is responsible for ensuring that the objectives, strategies and methods are consistent across the country, as the party at district level does within its district. Work with the party's membership development applies to the entire party organisation and its members.

### National membership development strategy

As we have noted before, the party should regularly emphasise the value of recruitment and membership development at all levels to show that the issue is a priority. From the Party Chair and Party Secretary in the Party Executive and down through the organisation. To create structure and a clear division of responsibilities, it is a good idea to decide on a long-term membership development strategy, for

example, for five years, at the national level. This strategy can include the following:

- A clear and well-supported purpose
- Background and analysis
- Clear, timely and measurable goals
- Target groups and strategic areas of activity
- Strategic approaches and methods
- Responsibilities and roles
- Monitoring and evaluation.

The strategy functions as a central guiding document, which all parts of the party have agreed to consult and work by. It can then be broken down and adapted to the district and local branch levels. The Party Executive decides on the national membership development strategy, and then the Party Secretary is responsible for its implementation. The Party Executive Secretariat leads the practical work at national level, the party districts coordinate regionally, and the local branches are responsible for this work locally and day-to-day work with the members.

#### FACTS

### MEMBER PANELS



The party needs to listen actively to its members in order for it to grow and develop. Member panels and member surveys are a simple tool for doing this. These can be carried out online and anonymously, where a representative sample of the members are given the opportunity to share their views on party policies, its organisation and communication. This can strengthen the trust and engagement of the members, as well as contribute to developing the party. It is also an excellent tool for monitoring how the membership development strategy is working nationally and in different parts of the party. ■

### Member register

Another crucial, and sometimes underestimated, task is the operation of the party's membership register. Whether the party has chosen to centralise these activities into a national register and database of common procedures, or whether each local branch is required to manage its own register, this activity has a key role to play in keeping track of members and their contact detail: who holds what position or role, being able to print the correct voting list, calculating mandates for different parts of the party in internal decision-making processes, and to notify and receive membership fees every year. A member register is the administrative heart of the operation of a political party and for its administrative processes to function.

Regardless of whether the membership register is operated nationally, it is the local branch that collects and updates information about its members. Party membership

is linked to the local branch, and it is also at the local level that part of the membership fee is paid.

The exact proportion of the fee to the local branch, district and national levels varies from party to party. In the Swedish Social Democratic Party, it is ultimately the National Conference that decides on these levels since managing members is coordinated nationally. But in many other parties the district and local branch fee levels are determined at the annual meeting or District Conference.

Maintaining the membership register is an important task for the local branch. It is a task that should be assigned to a member who has high trust and is good at keeping order. The party's task at the national level is to specify (in the party's constitution) the limits for membership (for example, restrictions such as age limits), and (if activities have been centralised) to receive and manage the national membership fees, and to collect all information from

all local branches in a national membership register. In that case, the Party Executive Secretariat also assumes the responsibility for coordinating the work of the whole party organisation to maintain the system.

Today, the member register is often also coordinated with the party's other contacts in a CRM system. This has great advantages in that you can build the entire member recruitment, welcoming, and activation chain into the system and establish automated processes, as well as communicate with different groups via e-mailings. Regardless of the technical solution used, it is important that the membership register is managed in the most secure way possible, as it contains sensitive personal data that relates to people's political views and activities. It is therefore necessary to have a rigorous approach to the security surrounding your systems, with secure internal processing, hosting and login.



## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- How important is it for political parties to have many, active and skilful members?
- What parts of the party work actively with the party's membership development and how are these interrelated?
- How is the local branch important for the party's membership development and membership care?
- How can we work at national level to prioritise the recruitment of new members? What is meant by a party having a recruitment culture?
- A party grows stronger and gains legitimacy when its membership reflects the society as a whole. What groups would we need to recruit in particular for our membership to do this?
- In the party's online and physical communications, you meet a lot of people who show interest in the party in different ways. Are we working strategically and following up on these contacts?
- What activities do we use in our own local branch for recruitment? Which of these is the most effective and fun?
- What should you consider in order to welcome new members into the local branch in a good way?
- Take a look at the checklist for welcoming new members. Is our party following this? If not, what parts are working and what parts do we need to develop?
- What does the value of being a member mean in practice, and what role does this play in how people relate to party membership? How does this work in our own party? What can be improved to increase the value of our party membership?
- What does activating new members in the local branch mean in practice?
- What activities can you use to get members involved in the party's activities?
- What activities are there that include recruitment, welcoming new members and activating new members as natural elements?





## **Education and training – developing the organisation through its members and representatives**

We have previously stressed the need to introduce new members so that they understand the party, the way it works, and can start to participate actively. A concrete way to do so and activate members in the party's activities is to offer them the opportunity to participate in the party's educational activities.

These also play a pivotal role in organising a popular movement party to become a powerful political movement. The more committed and competent members who participate are, the greater the party's potential to exert an influence within the party organisation and society as a whole. In short, knowledge is power.

Membership of a political party is in itself a form of personal growth. As a member you have the opportunity to participate actively and take responsibility in ongoing political work in many different areas. As a member you are often also thrown into situations and assigned tasks where you need to learn quickly on the spot from your



fellow party members, and training is often an integral part of party activities. Not least in field organising, as we have seen before. Well-developed and structured educational activities are the party's primary tool to provide members with in-depth knowledge and skills, thereby developing its own organisation.

The party's educational activities are intended to strengthen political, communications and organisational skills – among members as well as elected representatives in the party organisation and those who hold public office. The best kind of educational activities should therefore have both breadth and specialisation. Breadth in the sense that all members, old and new, should be aware of the

**“Not just for,  
but through the people.”**

Oscar Olsson, the inventor of the Swedish study circle

party's ideology, policies, organisation and practical ways of organising in day-to-day activities. Whether this applies to internal forms of work and how meetings and decision-making processes are conducted, or how field campaigns and advocacy work are conducted in the community. And specialisation in the sense that members who are elected to serve in official roles are to have the skills and self-confidence to take on these roles and be able to lead others in a positive way.

There should be a continuous flow of members who can contribute to the party and grow within their new roles. It is particularly important for a party whose organisation is growing rapidly or in the number of voters supporting the party. Then it becomes essential to have many new members who can represent and lead the party's work wherever the party establishes itself.

For the members, the educational activities also give them the opportunity to grow as human beings by developing their interests and knowledge, and thus their self-confidence. Good courses, training sessions or study circles also lead to participants feeling strengthened in their commitment and in the value of their party mem-

bership, while also deepening their relationships with other members of the party. It gives them the opportunity to meet with other people who are active in the party in an informal way, talk about what motivates them, and share their ideas and political visions.

In addition, a party's educational activities have a normative function. They communicate the frames and norms within which a party operates and establish this broadly at the national level through the active participation of the members in these activities. In short, the importance of the party's educational activities cannot be overestimated. It is important for the party's supply of skilled and competent people, its activities and organisational development, as well as for its management and the production of a shared identity.

Successful educational activities in parties are able to connect the value of party membership with long-term knowledge growth, leadership development, and the development of the party's policies and organisation. Especially when they make a clear contribution to the political change that the party is working to achieve.

## Knowledge stages – from broad to specialised

The Swedish Social Democratic Party offers basic training for new members that is intended to give all members basic knowledge of social democratic ideology, the party organisation and its history. It is intended to provide the foundational knowledge needed to go on to study other more specialised courses within the party's educational activities. These courses include courses for elected representatives in the party organisation, or for public office, in the form of leadership training and training for specific positions. Members of the executives in the party organisation are also offered process training so that they can develop their work to lead and develop the party organisation in the best way together. In addition, courses in particular policy areas as well as more practical organisational courses are also provided in different areas.





## Broad membership training

Membership training aims to introduce new members and provide them with the tools to have an influence in the party and in society at large. With insight into the party's ideology, history, politics and how the party organisation works, new members are better able to participate in the party and be active members. By guaranteeing all members access to high-quality membership training, you also add to the value of party membership and give them the foundation for other training courses in the party. A basic membership training is strategically important for building effective educational activities within the party. This training should be offered to each new member as soon as possible after they have joined the party.

The membership training parts 1 and 2 are based mainly on three course modules: Our history, Our ideology and Our organisation. In the third part, members are then given in-depth knowledge of organising in a popular movement and how you change society. Each part covers at least 18 hours of study, which corresponds to a study circle involving six sessions or a course lasting two full days. The basic member training has two basic goals:

- 1 **The knowledge goal** is that members who have chosen to participate in the training will acquire a basic knowledge and a better understanding of the history, values and organisation of the Social Democrats, as well as the importance of the popular movement as a force for change in society.
- 2 **The change goal** is that the training will lead to the participants being inspired, feeling empowered and taking responsibility for influencing the party's policies and organisation, as well as the development of society in general, together with other members of the party.

Broad membership training courses should be offered as close as possible to members, depending on how the party's educational activities are organised and how well-developed they are. In Sweden, parts 1 and 2 are organised at the local and regional levels, and the party districts are charged with coordinating these activities and ensuring that all new members are offered a place in these course modules within six months of joining the party. The Party Executive Secretariat is then responsible for offering those who have completed parts 1 and 2 the opportunity to complete part 3. The Secretariat is also responsible for training course facilitators, providing course materials, facilitator materials and evaluation tools.

Other training courses for members may be of a different kind and be adapted to the activities and needs of the local branch.

- **Thematic courses in particular policy areas** are intended to inspire members and lead to lively discussions about how the party's policies can be improved. The idea is that through gaining more knowledge and being exposed to new ideas and the opportunity to debate policy and values, participants' engagement with the party will be strengthened and they will gain new insights into policy development. These courses are often provided in the form of study circles at the local branch level based on course material that is developed centrally within the party. The course materials are aimed at all members who are interested – new members as well as those who have been members for some time. They are also suitable for members who hold public office at all levels. However, you can also develop your own basic materials locally concerning an issue you want to explore in more depth and combine the study circle with inviting local experts and representatives from other organisations to talk to the group.



- **Organisational courses:** These kinds of courses are practical in nature and are intended to provide the participants with concrete tools to be able to perform specific tasks. In the local branch, there are many skills that members need to learn more about in order for the local branch to function well. These kinds of courses could be for example training in debating and meeting facilitation techniques, how to conduct field campaigns or campaigns on social media, how to recruit new members, or write policy motions for submission to the party conferences. In particular in the run-up to election campaigns, a number of preparatory courses run focusing on election organising and the practical methods that members should be able to use in the election campaign. These courses can also have a narrower focus, aimed at people with particular roles such as a membership systems manager, or similar.

Having a national organisation for educational activities capable of supporting the local branches in their educational activities, providing them with course materials and practical tools, helps to make educational activities throughout the party high quality and more effective. However, it should not be forgotten that the local branches have a great deal of freedom and the opportunity to decide for themselves to conduct their own basic courses in areas that they perceive as needed or areas in which they are interested in growing and developing. Educational activities are an indispensable part of the party's organising and they are mainly implemented at the local branch level close to the members. It should not be, and it is not, difficult to create a course or a study circle. It is often sufficient reason to hold a course or study circle if a group of members want to improve themselves in a particular area.



## THE STUDY CIRCLE – FUNDAMENTAL TO LOCAL ORGANISING AND DEMOCRATIC LEARNING

Learning can occur through many different kinds of activities. Workshops, seminars or courses are often efficient and useful ways of learning, depending on their goals and the time you have for an activity.

A study circle is another example of an excellent format for the local branch's educational activities. It is an informal way of learning where the participants commit to attending during the period of time that the study circle runs. Study circles can cover all kinds of areas, and the leader of the study circle acts as a facilitator rather than a teacher. All participants contribute their knowledge and experience, and the group arrives at conclusions together. It is a very democratic way of learning that also teaches people to work together in groups, to listen to and respect each other's views, and to speak in front of other people. The goal is to learn something together.

The simple formula for a study the circle is 3-3-3. It should consist of at least three people who get together at least three times and complete at least hours of study together. However, a study circle usually consists of more people (maximum of 12 people) who get together for more hours than this. The leader of the study circle is responsible for preparing and managing the meetings and keeping in touch with the participants. In addition, you also need a simple work plan. That will clarify the concrete objectives of the study circle, i.e. what the group wants to achieve and when and where the group will meet.

The study circle is then based on self-study material for the participants which they then discuss based on a number of questions that they get before starting to read the material. The reading material could be a paper, a report or centrally produced course material within a specific area. The meetings of the study circle can then take place in one of the party's premises or at the home of one of the participants. You can also hold the meetings online using a video meeting app.

The study circle is a less hierarchical form of study since the participants have a greater influence over the goals and content of the course and a joint responsibility for the group achieving its objectives. It is simple and cost-effective form of study that can be adapted in scale and time. It is well suited to the local branch level of a party, and parties with limited resources. But it also works well in a party with more developed educational activities. In that case, local study circle leaders can be trained at the regional or national level, and have access to common tools and documentation, which can facilitate their activities.







## DIGITAL TOOLS IN EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Digital tools offer great possibilities for political parties' educational activities. Conducting courses partly or wholly online, using digital services such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams, can be a good complement to training that is conducted exclusively on site. This is especially the case for parties who have not had time to develop their educational activities at the national level or who have limited resources. These services allow the party to conduct courses throughout the country, fast and easily, in which many members can participate at the same time without the need for travel and accommodation. It is also easier for teachers, facilitators and participants to find time and be able to participate in these activities when they can do so from home. Today it is also possible to conduct a training course in a way that facilitates learning with group discussions in breakout rooms and common digital workspaces such as Jamboard.

It is also possible to create fully online training programmes and courses that members can complete individually when they have time. These can consist of recorded lectures, digital reading materials, simple online forums for group discussions, and simple online exams after each part of the course or pro-

gramme. This can be particularly useful if you want to offer new members a basic introduction quickly, as a link to the course can be sent in the welcome e-mail that goes out to new members. Or in educational activities aimed at representatives with new functional roles such as chair, treasurer or education officer.

However, you need to adapt your courses to function well online. What can be partly lost in online educational activities is the close and relationship-building social interaction that also plays an important role in a party's educational activities. But in the end, the way we as human beings learn remains the same, no matter if we meet physically or online. Learning still builds on basic ideas of inclusivity and the importance of sharing experiences with each other. But the conditions for learning are different in these two scenarios; thus you need to understand how to create the best conditions when moving from a physical meeting to an online meeting. Clear objectives, good preparation, dynamic presentations, high levels of interaction and participation, working together in small groups, sharing ideas, exercises that foster the development of relationships and networks, etc., are even more important when you are running courses online. ■



### **Building psychological safety**

Co-create a safe environment for meaningful exploration and qualitative learning.



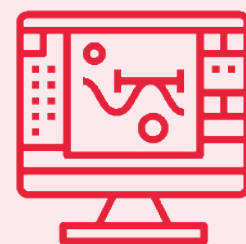
### **Create clarity**

Purposeful structure, setup and communication – internally for course delivery team and externally towards participants.



### **Enable participation and collaboration**

Design interactive processes for active participation and collective generation of insights.



### **Embrace technology and digital tools**

Make conscious choices in line with your learning fundamentals and apply a constructive attitude to new digital tools.

## Leadership training for members with official roles in or for the party

Being an elected representative in the party is an important and central role for the party's activities and organising. It is just as important to be an elected representative holding public office. For a party to grow and function, it needs to have many good leaders at all levels. It therefore needs to encourage, support and educate members to take on different leadership roles. They may need to be equipped with skills to manage both their area of expertise and the management responsibilities that follow from these roles.

Being a good leader is not something you are born to; it is something you learn through your own experiences, and what people see as good leadership can vary from individual to individual. It can therefore be worthwhile for a party to have a common, coherent picture of what good leadership is, which can form the basis for the party's leadership training. A leadership ideology that goes hand in hand with the party's ideology and political goals. The party's representatives not only need to have the ability to lead and represent a party, they also need to be a force for social change.

## *The party's view of good leadership guides its leadership training*

Parties are ideology-driven organisations whose activities are based on trust. The party's values are therefore the basis of the party's activities and the attitude the party has when it comes to leading others. Having a clearly expressed idea about what leadership is, a leadership ideology, can be a good support for every leader in the party and for developing the party's leadership training. The Party Executive of the Swedish Social Democratic Party has therefore decided on this. It is based on the party's values and a motto "You should be your values":

- All people are equally valuable and have an equal right to be different.
- We believe that every human being is a unique, thinking and reflective individual.
- People are social beings with the capacity and will to grow and develop, have an influence and take responsibility.
- We are all dependent on each other, and we need to meet with and interact with others in order to develop, learn new things, and grow as individuals. In democratic processes and meeting places that welcome, highlight, and affirm curiosity and questioning – and which empower people, dialogue, learning and knowledge – the individual will grow.
- Everyone should have the same right and opportunity to have an influence; everyone has the same obligation to take responsibility.

We must therefore strive for a culture in which people are heard, seen, respected and empowered. A culture that cultivates what is meaningful in engagement in politics. Everyone has a responsibility for the culture that is developed within the organisation. However, as a leader, you have a special responsibility since your behaviour has a major influence on how the organisation functions. The party's credibility stands or falls on how its leaders behave – if it lives up to its ideas and value base. Social Democratic leadership should therefore be:

- **Democratic** – everyone in the group gets the chance to express their views and everyone's arguments are valued on the same basis. When we make decisions, our decision-making processes are clear and transparent, so that the decisions are stronger for having been made by us together, and by having our backing.
- **Visible and encouraging** – we make every effort to ensure that everyone gets the space they need and that everyone has the opportunity to appear to advantage. We believe in people's capacity and willingness to grow and develop in new and old roles and tasks.
- **Courageous and confidence-inspiring** – We stand up for each other and support each other. If one of us makes



a mistake, we will be critical of the mistake of course, but we are nonetheless there for each other as fellow members of the party. We do not back down from acting on issues that are experienced as difficult or complex.

- **Visionary and persevering** – we keep the movement's ideology and purpose firmly in focus, having the courage to think in new ways but acting in ways that mean we can stand by what we have said and done for a long time to come. This applies to the policy content as well as how we behave towards each other.

The term "leader" is often used to refer to people elected by members to a role within the party organisation or to people elected to public office. In addition to these, there are numerous situations where members practise leadership day to day. In particular in the party's campaign activities. Regardless of the types of tasks and roles involved, the party's leadership ideology must permeate its activities.

## *Different parts of the leadership training*

In order for elected representatives to be able to meet the party's expectations of them, they can be offered leadership training where they can develop their personal leadership style and also build networks with other leaders in the party. The Swedish Social Democratic Party has a clear ambition to provide its elected representatives throughout the country with the knowledge and tools that will equip them for their duties.

- **Basic leadership training:** As with the basic member training, there is great value in having an introductory basic training in leadership. In the Swedish case, this has two parts. Leadership training for all elected representatives – regardless of the type of role they have, whether that role is within the party organisation or in public office. In addition, they receive training that is more suited to the type of role the elected representative has: elected by the party membership for a role in the party organisation, or elected in general elections by the people for public office. This training can be done at local or regional level and the party districts are ultimately responsible for these courses.

- **Supplementary training – for those who lead fellow members of the party:** This supplementary training provides the opportunity for developing leadership skills in the Social Democratic Party including how to implement social democratic policies. The goal is for participants to really come to grips with their leadership role, develop their leadership style and learn how to deal with the kinds of situations that may arise in their roles and activities. The Party Executive is responsible for the implementation of this training across the country.
- **Advanced leadership training:** This training targets those who have been elected representatives for the party at a high level for a long time, such as a member of the Party Executive, group leader in the parliament, or experienced municipal and regional commissioners. The Party Executive is also responsible for implementing this training across the country.

In addition to these basic leadership training course, training specific to the individual's role and function is offered at local and district level:

- **Training for specific leadership roles:** The two main categories are elected representative in the party such as the chair of the local executive - a role leading fellow members of the party; or elected representative for the party such as politicians in the municipal or regional councils.
- **Training for specific functions:** These courses focus on specific roles within the party district executives such as chairperson, education officer, membership officer, election campaign manager, election committee chair, or international leader. The Party Executive is responsible for training the party district leaders who are then responsible for passing on this knowledge to the leaders in their local branches. There are also basic study materials available about being a member of the executive from which the local branch can create their own courses.

Finally, there are special process training courses for how to develop the work of the party executives. The local branch and district executives play a key role in the party's activities and development. This training provides support for developing the work of these executives together.

For new parties or parties with more limited resources than their Swedish sister party, there are simpler ways to start building up more structured educational activities. As we pointed out earlier, engaging members to hold study circles in various areas works well. The same applies to leadership and the party's various leadership roles and functions. You can also use mentoring – leaders supervising and supporting other, new leaders. There are concrete tools to start from as a mentor, and the party can decide that all

newly elected representatives should be offered a mentor when they start their new roles. In short, it is a question of using the resources and knowledge that exist in and close to your party organisation, as well as gradually starting to build up your own educational activities organisation. In this work, it will help to have clear roles in the party about who does what at different levels.

## FACTS

### TRAIN THE TRAINER

A simple training format that can be used in a party's educational activities is the scalable train-the-trainer method. It can be particularly useful for new parties with limited resources that have not yet established a more permanent organisation for educational activities. The method is based on a course facilitator training a group of members and at the same time preparing them to lead the same training for another group. If the format and content of the training is relatively simple, the goal can be to get everyone in the training to pass on its content in new training courses. However, the method more often involves first identifying and specifically selecting particularly suitable candidates who then receive in-depth training on how to lead and supervise other members in training courses in the specific area.

The advantage of this model is its efficiency: being able to rapidly teach new skills and knowledge to a broad group of people by involving the party's own internal resources. Because the number of new course facilitators increases exponentially, a large number of members can be trained in a short period of time. This means that to initiate a broad training effort, only one main course facilitator is required to develop the training material and hold the initial training course. The method also contributes to uniformity and quality-assured results when the same study materials and methods are used by the course facilitators as they themselves used when they were participants in the course. This method also creates a more congenial atmosphere, since in many cases the course facilitator already knows the course participants. The course facilitator will then be seen as one of them rather than someone who is above them or comes from outside.

This method also means valuable skills development for the members themselves since many people have the opportunity to develop their leadership skills and to conduct training courses themselves. In this way, a party can quickly build up a skilled internal training team. When people participate in a train-the-trainer programme and start teaching their own fellow party members, their skills as course facilitators will continue to grow. The next time that the party needs someone to conduct a training course on another subject, you already have a team of skilled course facilitators at your disposal. ■



## The party's education organisation – local, regional and national responsibilities

As we have seen above, the responsibility for basic member and leader training lies with the party's local branch and district levels. The key people for driving these educational activities are the party's education officers. In the Swedish Social Democrats' Constitution, an education officer is to be appointed from all the district executives and local branch executives. Although the party executive at these levels has a joint responsibility for educational activities, the education officer has a particularly important role to play in driving and developing educational activities within the framework of the executive's work.

They are responsible for identifying needs each year and cataloguing resources, materials and potential collaborators. And for setting goals and planning the activities in the educational activities plan decided by the executive. The education officer then reports back to the executive after the end of the financial year when the planned activities have been carried out. They are also responsible for coordinating the work and contact with the course facilitators who are located locally, and with the study circle leaders. The education officer is also responsible for local training of new study circle leaders.

In order to assist the education officer, and not place an excessive workload on one person, an educational activities committee under the party executive can be formed. This kind of committee can be found at the local or district levels, and consist of several members tasked with developing, implementing and monitoring educational activities in the party organisation at their level. In the first instance, the members of this committee could be the local course facilitators and study circle leaders who are part of the local branch or party district organisation's educational activities.

### National educational activities organisation

Although educational activities are primarily carried out at the local branch and district levels, there is a clear responsibility as well at the national level. The responsibility at this level concerns quality assurance for basic training courses: that they have the same goals, content and quality, regardless of where in the country the training is conducted. In order to create this uniformity and quality assurance, the party uses a common policy document, the national educational activities plan, which is decided by the Party Executive. This plan clarifies the roles in educational activities nationally and who should do what. It has clear and

measurable goals, and defines the party's education efforts and course offerings.

The Executive Committee of the Party Executive also appoints a central educational activities committee, which is led by the Party Executive's education officer. This person is responsible for developing and implementing the educational activities plan approved by the Party Executive, and for identifying and following up on the needs of the party organisation in the area of educational activities. The educational activities committee is also responsible for revising the educational activities plan if necessary and presenting the activities to be carried out in order to achieve the plan's objectives prior to the start of each new financial year. Through the Party Executive Secretariat, with its special educational activities ombudsmen, the committee also acts as a national resource centre for the party's educational activities as a whole. The national resource Centre provides study materials, course facilitator training and other resources that party district and local branch educational activities need.

The central educational activities committee in turn appoints facilitators who are part of a national team. This team consists of experienced facilitators who have facilitated courses and led study circles within the party for many years. The national facilitator team guides and supports the education officers at the party district and local branch levels. In other words, they fulfil the function of facilitating the facilitators, and have a central role in assuring the quality of the courses and training at all levels of the party.

The Party Executive Secretariat is also responsible for regularly conducting training for facilitators. These are carried out by the national facilitator team and aim to provide an understanding of the background, content and goal of the member and leadership training courses and to develop the participants' skills in teaching and learning methods. The trained facilitators then become part of the party district's facilitator team and after this training should be able to put together and conduct the basic steps in the party's membership and leadership training courses.

In order to plan, coordinate and promote the importance of educational activities within the party, the party invites all those involved to a national educational activities gathering every year. This is where all parts of the party's educational activities come to be inspired and learn about new initiatives in the area. The annual educational activities gathering also serves as a forum for dialogue where the different parts of the party's educational activities can get together and discuss and develop these activities for the coming year. The Party Executive Secretariat also operates the party's national educational activities portal. This is a portal for course and facilitator materials, tools and the dates for national courses across the country.



## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Why are educational activities important for a political party, and especially for a popular movement party? In what way is knowledge power?
- What is the role of educational activities in developing the organisation? What is their role for individual members?
- How important are educational activities for the cohesion and identity of a party?
- Why should educational activities have both breadth and specialisation? What does this mean in practice?
- What concrete aims do broad member training courses fulfil? Are there examples of courses for members of our own party?
- Do we have an introductory basic training in our party that we offer all new members? What do we feel that we have primarily taken away with us from this training?
- Describe other broad training courses for members organised by our party. What are their purposes?
- What is the purpose of special leadership training for elected representatives? Are there examples of facilitator courses in our own party?
- Why is it good to base these on a common view of what good leadership is? What should this contain? How does this work in our own party?
- Describe some leadership courses that our own party organises. Have we taken such a course ourselves? What do we feel that we have primarily taken away with us from these courses?
- What does our own party's educational organisation look like? What are the responsibilities at the local, regional and national levels? What do we need to strengthen and develop?
- What can we develop in our own local branch activities? What resources do we have at our disposal? How can we make the best use of these?
- What is the ultimate mark of successful educational activities?

**Photo:**

page 1: Anna Bergkvist  
page 4: Mikael Landelius  
page 5: Ida Borg  
page 6: Martin Hörner Kloo  
page 8: Anna Bergkvist

page 10: Ellen Aguirre  
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## Notes

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# An introductory course in how to run and represent a party

Democratic parties in different parts of the world can learn a lot from each other's experiences and practices. This introductory course and its modules focus on how a party can strengthen its organisational and political capacity to become a strong and democratic party with active members and inclusive structures and activities.

In this fifth module, we discuss the importance to parties of growth and building a stronger organisation locally with many active members who can continuously develop their skills and expertise to make the best contribution to the party's activities. The aim is to give you a good practical introduction to how political parties can increase their resources and strengthen their organisation by:

- developing their activities and growing locally,
- using community and field campaign organising,
- recruiting, welcoming and motivating new members through member development, member care, and operations development,
- working in a structured way with training and skills development for members and elected representatives.

The aim is to offer practical knowledge, methods and tips for how you can plan and develop your own local party's efforts in these areas.

You can read more about the course and find all its modules here

**[www.palmecenter.se/palmeacademy](http://www.palmecenter.se/palmeacademy)**