



CREATING A SUCCESSFUL GRASSROOTS CAMPAIGN

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Civic Leadership

Video Transcript

[TEXT: YOUNG AFRICAN LEADERS INITIATIVE
ONLINE TRAINING SERIES]

[TEXT: Creating a Successful Grassroots Campaign]

[TEXT: Learning Objectives:

1. How to strategically identify challenges.
2. How to understand and incorporate stakeholders.
3. How to develop a plan of action to build a sustainable campaign.]

[TEXT: Omekongo Dibinga Director, UPstander International]

My name is Omekongo Dibinga, and this is “Creating a Successful Grassroots Campaign.” In this lesson, we’ll learn how to strategically identify challenges that need to be addressed, how to understand and incorporate important stakeholders in a campaign and how to develop a step-by-step plan of action to build a sustainable campaign.

Creating a successful grassroots campaign does not happen by accident. It requires serious and active action planning on the part of the leaders of the campaign.

Step 1: Strategically identify challenges that need to be addressed.

Your team cannot address every single challenge facing your community. Therefore, it makes the most sense to sit down with your team and identify one specific issue that you are going to target. Ask what topic, issue or theme do you want to work to change? If you’re wanting to address unemployment in your community, for example, three problems could be lack of available jobs in your community, lack of training for the available jobs or lack of transportation to get potential workers to the jobs. While all three of these issues are worthy of your attention, you must pick one to channel your efforts towards.

Step 2: Brainstorming ideas for the project and incorporating important stakeholders into your campaign.

Amongst your leadership team, you should now begin to come up with creative ideas to address your issue. Every idea at this point should be welcomed. Ideas can range from having training weekends where professionals come and volunteer their services (or are paid a stipend if you find the right funding partner) to partnering with the local university to provide language classes, if language barriers are one of the obstacles for members of your community to gain employment.





After this ideas-sharing session, choose, by vote, the topic you are going to focus on. Make sure that the goals and timeline of your program are SMART. Smart stands for Strategic, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely.

Once you do this, you must identify stakeholders. Stakeholders are people or organizations that you believe will support your cause. If you recognize early on institutions or people who may be against you, the chances of you being able to figure out ways to work with them positively will increase.

Also note that some stakeholders who may support you could also work against you if you do not approach them properly. For example, if you identify university professors as potential stakeholders, they may join your cause because they want to teach students. However, if you are asking them to volunteer and cover their own costs for the training, they may choose not to support your efforts. Try to think of as many scenarios as possible in your search for allies and create a strategic plan for engaging each one. Once you do this, you are able to move on to...

Step 3: Developing a step-by-step plan of action to build a sustainable campaign.

What you need to do in this step is solidify the date or dates that you plan to have your activities. Before you create the timeline of events, you absolutely must delegate responsibilities to your team. One of the biggest mistakes leaders make is trying to do everything on their own. Delegating responsibilities is a good way to hold everyone on your team accountable.

Be as specific as possible in your delegation. Some examples of duties that may need to be filled include media relations, social media engagement, government or university liaison, advertising, etc. Every person must have a detailed summary of their roles that should be shared with everyone on the team. Once this is done and everyone is working with their respective assignments, you can begin the process of launching your campaign!

To build a sustainable grassroots campaign, everyone must know their roles and have clearly defined ways that they can contribute. Leaders who try to take on too many responsibilities will be building a campaign of one, not of many. To be successful, you must trust your team and have specific SMART goals that can be repeated for long-term success.

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