
AFFINITY GROUPS

“Affinity” or “Action” Groups (AGs) are usually composed of 5-20 people who function together for a particular action or throughout a campaign. The Affinity Group structure helps facilitate organizing large numbers of people.

Affinity Groups serve as basic planning and decision-making bodies for an action. Each AG generates ideas and makes all the basic decisions about their participation in an action. A representative from the group meets with representatives from other AGs to communicate, coordinate and consolidate the different ideas and then bring the coordinated information or proposal back to the group for final discussion and approval.

Affinity Groups provide a way for people to get to know each other and learn to work together before an action. They are a place of support where members can share their vision, creativity, and analysis as well as explore their fears and concerns. By generating familiarity and trust, the AG structure reduces the possibility of infiltration by outside provocateurs.

Affinity Groups may form around common characteristics such as geographic proximity, religious faith perspective, feminism, or in the case of international peace teams, language.

AFFINITY GROUP ROLES:

- **Facilitator(s):** prepares agenda for meetings, facilitates group discussion of plans, encourages broad participation, tests for agreement, initiates process suggestions, moves group through agenda according to agreed upon time limits, restates decisions made by the group.
- **Notetaker:** records the group's decisions and other important aspects of the discussions; makes copies available to group members.
- **Timekeeper:** reminds group or facilitator when the time allotted for each agenda item is up.
- **Liaison:** represents group to meeting (council) of all AG representatives and shares information from AG council with group.
- **Communications:** handles mailing and phone lists.
- **Logistics Coordinator:** handles details of housing, food, travel, action supplies (i.e. banners, signs), etc.
- **Media Spokesperson:** interprets groups actions to the press.

Adapted From: "Organizing for Resistance: Historical and Theological Reflections and Organizing" by the Chicago Religious Task Force on Central America, 1985.