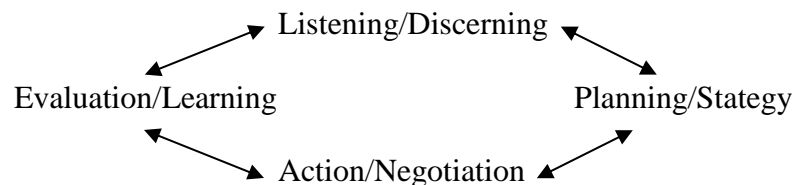


Community Organizing in the Industrial Areas Foundation Tradition

The Industrial Areas Foundation exists to build power in the civil sector through creating and deepening relationships and developing leaders in order to act for the common good. The IAF builds power through bringing together strong institutions whose leaders and members participate in the organizing cycle to listen, discern, act and evaluate on their actions along with other institutional leaders.

Organizing Cycle



IAF organizations are built with and among civil institutions, churches, unions, civic member groups, who in a variety of ways function as mediating institutions. Mediating institutions:

- a) Buffer and protect their members from outside pressures
- b) Offer an interpretation or world view which may or may not be the dominant view
- c) Can join with others to create a platform for action collectively
- d) Forms children and members based on the institutions' unique values and worldview
- e) Holds a place for the values' formation through multiple generations and in changing circumstances

One unique feature of the IAF tradition is the central and public, though often not up front role of the organizer. The organizer is not a consultant, nor an expert in all fields, but draws from a variety of tools to activate the organization. IAF organizers “organize the organization” which often means disorganizing and reorganizing in order to keep the organization fresh and flowing. He or she works with members and leaders to:

- Increase the active participation of members
- Create the conditions in which new leaders emerge
- Develop relationships within and among partner organizations
- Build power within and among institutions to act collectively for the common good identified by the collective institutions

Michael Gecan in *Effective Organizing for Congregational Renewal* does an excellent job of describing the key tools of organizing:

1. **The Individual Meeting.** Sometimes referred to as the relational meeting or the one-to-one. This fundamental practice of organizing he calls “the most important, effective and least used organizational tool in congregational life today.”
2. **Power (Relational) Analysis**—both of the institution and the broader community. A way of “getting on the balcony” to diagnose and strategize before taking action.
3. **Teaching and Training** within and among institutional leaders to build up and connect leaders and institutions
4. **Action and Evaluation** complete the cycle where in many congregations listening and relationships rarely lead to action and learning