Build a Grassroots Community Network

Why focus on networking? There is an Ethiopian proverb that sums it up pretty well: "When spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion." By working with community groups and key local officials, we can leverage political clout for our campaigns and build the profile of our work in your own cities and towns.

Step One

Identify local organizations, groups of activists, officials and influential members of your community that you can contact. Here are some suggestions to jump start you thinking:

*Community Organizations:* Community Programs, HIV/AIDS Organizations, Neighborhood Associations, Poverty Organizations, Health Care Centers / Organizations, Microcredit Organizations, Women's Centers / Organizations, Youth Organizations, Religious Groups and Organizations, Universities and Schools.

*Political Contacts:* City/State/Province Workers, Local Elected Officials, Political Party Representatives, Political Activists and Groups.


Step Two

Develop a timeline, plan, and a support system for networking and coalition building. Determine who among your allies will call each target and by what day.

Step Three

Have a clear idea of different types of activities or projects to discuss with the organizations and individuals you are calling. There are different levels of involvement that you should offer:

*Basic Level* Sign on as an endorser or agree to attend coalition meetings.

*Intermediate Level:* Cosponsor a community event to raise awareness or speak at press conference.
Advanced Level: Send out action alerts to entire mailing list, use staff time to build resources (grassroots network, money) or mobilize influential board members to use political access to raise the issues.

**Step Four**

Pick up the phone and do it!

*Source: RESULTS Educational Fund’s Activist Milestones*