

**DON'T  
GIVE UP.  
DON'T STOP  
TRYING.**

**THE  
STAKES  
ARE FAR  
TOO HIGH.**

# FIGHT THE POWER?

# MAP THE POWER!

## Who has the power to make a change?

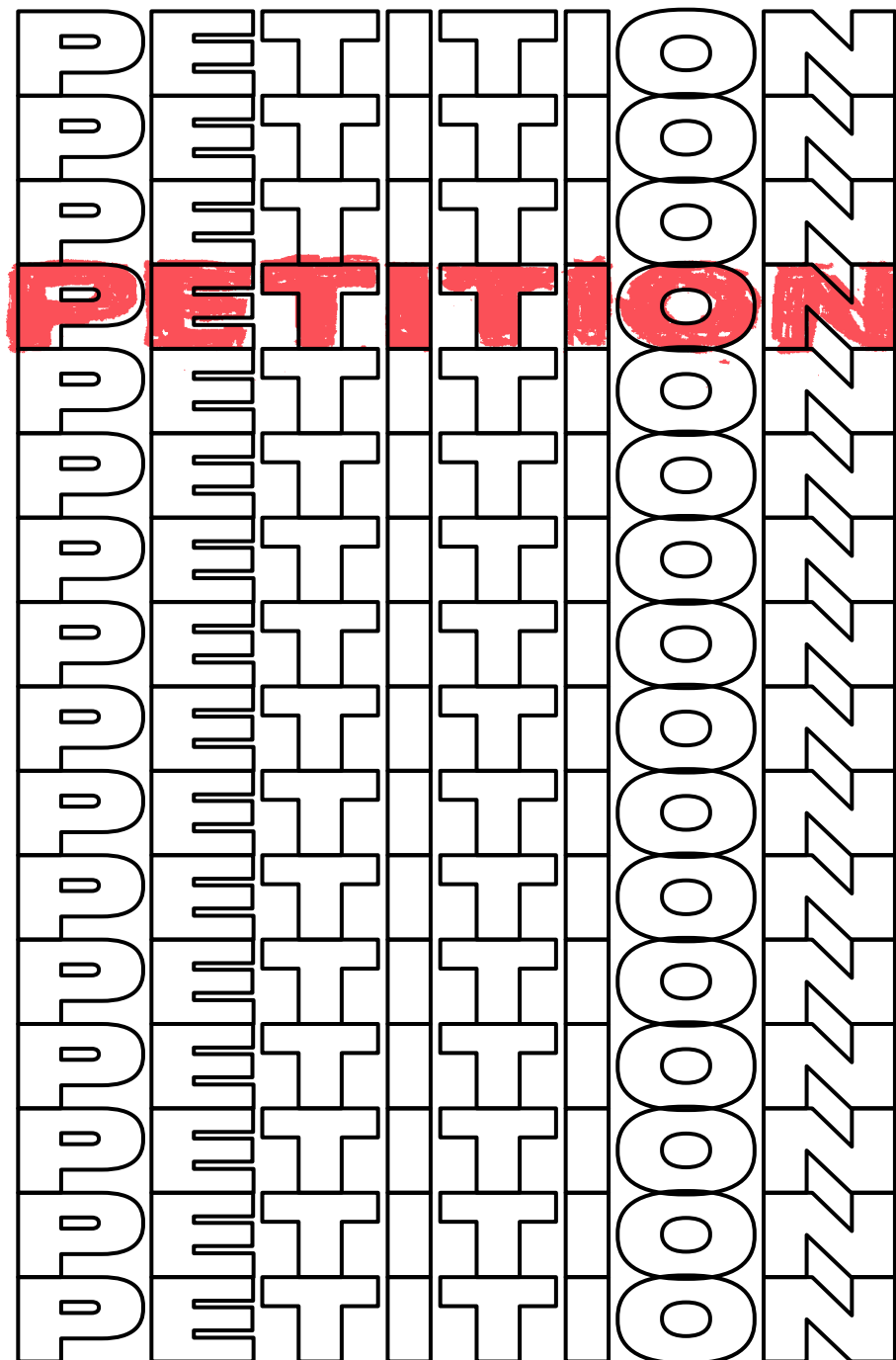
Start off by digging deep into the issue you've identified as important. Research all you can about that topic. Scour the internet, open up a history book and don't be afraid to contact activists you find online for advice. Sometimes working out whose minds need changing will be easy, but at other times a complex web will quickly form.

Whether it's the closure of a local library that has you seething, a supermarket selling unethical products, or the government leading your country to war, mapping out where power lies will be invaluable to your cause.

Creating a campaign to win is no mean feat, but if you haven't identified who has the power to bring about change, you might well find yourself targeting your efforts in the wrong direction.

Let's say you want the cost of rent reduced in your university halls. Do you speak to a class representative, your lecturer, the cleaning staff, the student union or the company responsible for maintaining the building?

Power mapping is a tool you can use to identify your targets. It isn't just about picking out who sits at the table, but who they are influenced by, and what might matter to them. This is an exercise in unpicking power dynamics – identifying the different stakeholders, as well as the various levels of power and how they intersect. In every power map there will be both primary and secondary targets: the people who'll have the final say, and those who can put pressure on them.



# Nothing beats a good old-fashioned petition

Gathering names on a petition was once a time-consuming and arduous task, but the internet has revolutionized the process. Petitions are an easy way for people to show their support and put their name to a cause without too much commitment, and they can also be a catalyst for getting people in power to pay attention.

In August 2011 a new e-petitions website ([petition.parliament.uk](http://petition.parliament.uk)) was launched, which allows any British citizen or UK resident to petition the government directly. If 10,000 people sign up to a petition about a law or policy, the government is obliged to make a formal response. Hit 100,000 and it will be considered for debate in Parliament.

There are plenty of other sites that allow anyone to build a petition, including [avaaz.org](http://avaaz.org), [38degrees.org.uk](http://38degrees.org.uk) and [change.org](http://change.org). If the government isn't your target, these may be a better bet.

There's nothing like face-to-face contact to get people engaged, so if you're campaigning on a local issue it's well worth hitting the streets with pen and paper, too. Make sure you're addressing the petition to the relevant body, company or decision-maker. Keep the demands clear, add context to help people digest the issue and make them aware of how their data will be used.

When you've reached your target number, petition hand-ins are also an effective way of getting media attention around your campaign (see Chapter 3).

Just remember: petitions alone won't create change. It's what you do with them that counts.

# Time to assemble

Holding meetings is a great way of growing your activist network, bringing together those already engaged and inviting new people into the fold. If you're just starting out, call your gathering an 'open meeting' and encourage anyone who might be interested in getting involved to attend – regardless of what sort of commitment they can make.

As your campaign develops you'll want to hold some closed meetings with just people you know and trust, but maintaining regular open meetings will ensure your network grows.

Scout out a location that is accessible to everyone. Picking a pub, for example, might prevent young people or non-drinkers from attending. Make sure there's wheelchair access and public transport links if possible, too.

One way of ensuring meetings are democratic yet efficient is to share an agenda in advance and ask people to make suggestions. **Once you have an agenda, stick to it. Make sure to keep to time.**

Appointing someone to chair each meeting will help things run smoothly – they'll get you through the agenda and make sure everyone gets their say. Change up who chairs meetings regularly, though, and make sure to keep the position diverse.

## FYI

Remember – anyone can attend an open meeting, so if you have sensitive plans or information you don't want the world to know, consider keeping them under wraps.



# Get hands-on

Hand signals in meetings, developed by the Occupy Movement in New York in 2011, are a great way of increasing accessibility while making the consensus decision-making process smoother. By using them, anyone can share their feelings with the chair without a discussion descending into a shouting match.



## WANT TO TALK

Raise one hand in the air if you have a new point to make



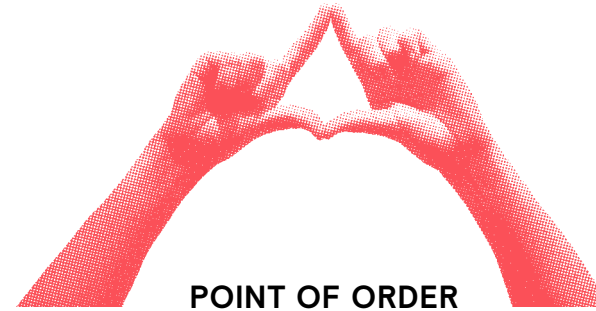
## DIRECT RESPONSE

Point a finger if you want to reply directly to someone



## BLOCK

When using consensus decision-making, this means 'no' to a proposal



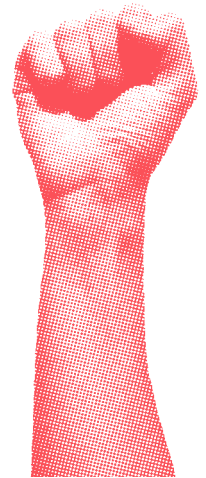
## POINT OF ORDER

Use this if there's an urgent logistical issue to be raised



## AGREE

Wave your hands in the air to show support for what is being said



## OPPOSE

Raise a fist if you want to show serious opposition



## CLARIFY

Make this shape with your hand if you don't understand



## DISAGREE

Drop your hands down if you disagree with a speaker

# THE LGBT+ ACTIVISTS STANDING UP FOR MIGRANTS' RIGHTS

Getting a movement off the ground takes guts and vision, but keeping it going – and actually changing lives – is another matter altogether. For LGSMMigrants, this learning curve has been steep but incredibly fruitful. Having found a way to work together, they can now get on with the job: tackling the greatest refugee crisis our generation has ever seen.

We all know how it feels to put the world to rights over a couple of drinks, thrashing out society's problems while searching for solutions with friends. That's exactly what Ben Smoke was doing at a house party back in August 2015, but this conversation wasn't forgotten once the hangover set in. Instead it led to the creation of an activist network – Lesbians and Gays Support the Migrants (LGSMMigrants) – which has gone on to build bridges between communities and help shift the toxic narrative about migrants in Britain, while also raising money to support grassroots campaigns.

'We were sat up in a room with a few beers at the peak of the "migrant crisis",' explains Ben. 'Refugee camps in Calais were getting a lot of press, far-right commentators were talking about the need for warships to be sent to attack refugees drowning in the sea. David Cameron – then Prime Minister – dehumanized migrants by referring to them as swarms.'

The LGBT+ community has a long tradition of activism and solidarity. During the 1980s' miners strike, another group of queer campaigners came together to form the original LGSM: Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners. Ben and his friends felt it was time for those seeking a better life in Britain to be supported in the same way. The key to success for both groups? Getting organized.

After a few preliminary chats between the founders, an open meeting at a local community centre was called. 'We created a Facebook page, a Twitter account and an email', recalls Ben. 'Suddenly we found there was a huge appetite within the community to get involved.' Ben and his fellow activists came up with a plan of action outlining their ideas, to be presented at the meeting, and over 100 interested people showed up to join them. After a brief introduction, the crowd was split into working groups: fundraising, actions and events. By the end of the evening, plans were drawn up to hold a direct action outside the Home Office in London, as well as fundraising bucket-shakes in the city centre. A charter outlining the group's aims and objectives was also agreed.



# Hitting the headlines

From local blogs to international newspapers, the work of activists (and yes, it's work) can make the front page. Journalists are always on the prowl for a scoop, and with just a little preparation and coordination, it's easier than you'd think to get your story in the press.

Your first step is to scope out exactly which element of your campaign you want to be picked up, and when. A media strategy should ensure that your story builds and develops for ongoing coverage and attention. Don't let your efforts be reduced to a flash in the pan.

Draw up a timeline of stories you'd ideally see covered: for example, the launch of your movement, the demands from a meeting, the build-up to a protest and then the victory when you win. Of course you will need to keep this fluid as your plans evolve and grow.

Identifying journalists, commentators and outlets that'll be interested in your story is vital; sending a universal press release to every staff member at *The New York Times* is far from the best way to ensure your story gets picked up.

Regional media outlets are prime territory for campaigns that affect your local community, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't also hit up the national press. Rolling news channels have plenty of time to fill, too, so don't assume they won't be interested.

YOU HAVE  
THE POWER  
TO MAKE  
THE NEWS.





## Social media (and how to own it)

Social media has changed the game for activists. At the click of a button, it's now possible to reach millions of people on your own terms, and to get your message out there.

Avoid using personal accounts – set up a campaign page on Facebook and other social media platforms so that your audience and network can grow independently from you.

It's also worth having a group of people overseeing each account. Your followers will want to be in touch and comments might need moderating, so spread the workload to make sure you remain on the ball. And if the police start to keep tabs on your campaigning, administrators of your groups or pages might be singled out as ringleaders. The more of you listed, the harder they will find this to do.

Agree on a process for posting to avoid any repetition, confusion or arguments about tone or message further down the line.

Be careful what you share, retweet or endorse: connecting with and supporting other causes can be a great way of building solidarity, but make sure you keep posts focused and aligned with your own group's beliefs.



# Branding isn't just for the big guys

As your campaign expands and evolves, it's worth scoping out ways to build a brand. That doesn't mean corporate jargon and billboard campaigns: good design and clear messaging are all you need to make your mark. A simple slogan on its own might not seem much, but articulating your message in a single, repeated phrase will help ensure that what you have to say is carried far and wide.

Words are important, but so are visuals. An effectively designed logo can be a powerful way to make your movement instantly recognizable, so scout out the skills of those involved in your campaign and wider community, and brainstorm how your broader mission could be represented in a simple drawing.

Another option is to take a colour, symbol or shape and start using it on all your campaign materials – a simple, repeated sign that can be replicated time and time again. In the same way that we all know what a red ribbon signifies when worn around World AIDS day, there's no reason why you can't create a unique emblem that will be inextricably linked to your campaign.

One of the most successful examples of art and activism colliding was the work done by ACT UP, an LGBT+ direct-action and advocacy campaign group. Growing out of New York City in the 1980s, ACT UP set out to improve the lives of people with AIDS. These activists took a pink triangle and the slogan 'SILENCE = DEATH', and turned it into an international symbol that resonates across the globe to this day.



# Time to assemble

If you're coordinating an action, it's worth setting aside time for your fellow activists to come together and get creative with placards, banners and other props. Holding a making day is a tried-and-tested way of getting people excited before any big day.

Find an accessible and open space – think church halls, community centres or even an outdoor area in the summer – and invite people down on an evening or weekend to get involved. If you've got the budget, then bring along communal materials and encourage anyone attending to bring resources with them, too.

Days like this won't just leave you with attention-grabbing creations, you'll also find it builds excitement and helps a community start to form.

There'll be some people keen to support your cause who might not be able to attend a protest, action or rally. Holding events like this offers them an alternative way to get involved.

Why not ask those who join you to make extra placards and posters? There's nothing wrong with being over-prepared. Provide refreshments and play music through a set of speakers; this will help keep people around and engaged for the day.

# Prepare your props

Banners and placards are activist staples, but that doesn't mean there's no space to find other ways to get creative for a cause. Think carefully about whether visuals, props or objects could complement your actions.

When Greenpeace activists wanted to draw the world's attention to melting polar ice caps, they built a giant polar bear to make people take note. The bear was paraded through the streets at protests around the Paris Climate Talks; it was parked outside Shell's London headquarters when the company intended to continue with damaging plans to drill for oil in the Arctic.

On a smaller scale, you might wish to think simple: inflatables, cardboard cut-outs and flags are just some of the props you could employ. These won't just help in making your action feel cohesive; eye-catching imagery might also find its way onto social media and into the mainstream press.

Costumes are also a failsafe way to get onlookers talking, providing photographers and the media with an image that's sure to generate buzz. Activists from the British women's and non-binary campaign group Sisters Uncut dressed as suffragettes outside the Houses of Parliament to highlight the need for more provision for survivors of domestic violence. People dressed as dinosaurs marched outside the White House to demonstrate against President Trump's cuts to national service programmes like the Peace Corps.

If there's a particular colour associated with your campaign, then why not ask those attending an action to come dressed in clothes to match?

# YOU'RE MAKING

# HISTORY

From placards to banners, stencils to badges, the tools activists produce aren't just works of art, they're artefacts of change. Whenever possible, document your creations by taking photographs of them. One day, these could be icons for others to take inspiration and learn from.



# HOW TO MAKE YOUR ACTION IMPOSSIBLE TO IGNORE



Sometimes the old saying ‘Hit them where it hurts’ really comes into its own. That was the thinking behind Ende Gelände (‘Here and no further’), a monumental climate action that saw activists from across Europe shut down one of the continent’s biggest coal mines.

It’s 13 May 2016 – the evening before Ende Gel@nde, Europe’s biggest climate action for a generation. Just under 150 kilometres south of Berlin, the village of Proschim is a hive of activity. Activists from all across Europe are descending on this sleepy hamlet with a single goal: to shut down a lignite coal mine that, as one of the continent’s dirtiest polluters, spits out an average of three million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per year.

‘I just think about the future, when I’m sat down one day with my children’, says Bethan Lloyd, a 29-year-old musician from North Wales, now living in Berlin. ‘I imagine them asking me, “Mum, what did you do about all this?” And I can’t face the idea of telling them that I sat down quietly and did nothing.’

When it comes to climate change, the facts are overwhelming: temperatures are rising, the Arctic is melting, and sea levels rose by 19 centimetres in the twentieth century. The United Nations has predicted rising temperatures will see 250 million people displaced by 2050. There is, however, a rapidly growing movement of people who refuse to be passive; people willing to put their bodies on the line in the fight against climate change.

In December 2015, world leaders met in Paris for COP21, an international climate summit tasked with halting global warming. Despite the rhetoric and the headlines, the talks were deemed a failure by many at the time: the agreement isn’t legally binding, the goals have been labelled insufficient and the proposals won’t come into effect until 2020 at the earliest.

However, Melanie Mattauch, who works for 350.org, an international NGO determined to mobilize the masses to tackle climate change across the globe, remains optimistic. ‘The reality is, we went in not expecting anything meaningful to happen. What we wanted from Paris was for the movement to gather strength. And it happened.’

In the end, nearly 3,000 people came together on 14 May in Proschim to amplify their individual voices as a single collective, intent on breaching the perimeter of the mine. At previous protests batons and teargas had