

Resilience Based Organizing



In conventional campaign-based organizing, communities identify a problem/issue and then target a political figure with decision-making power to change rules or implement regulations in order to address that problem. This type of organizing is essential, and often wins incremental gains and reforms that make the difference in the lives of countless everyday people. And yet, a different (for many of us) strategic approach to organizing is growing among communities deeply steeped in ecological consciousness.

Using **Resilience-Based Organizing**, or RBO, we use our **collective labor** to meet our **collective needs**, in such a way as to publicly **expose illegitimate laws/power**, and instead **assert our right to self-govern**. Rather than asking a corporation or government official to act, we use our own labor do whatever we need to do to survive and thrive as a people and a planet, knowing that our actions conflict with legal and political structures set up to serve the interests of the powerful. This forces the question of whether we have the ability to take right action in our collective interests. We call this **creating a crisis of jurisdiction**, or a crisis of governance.

There are four core ingredients that make Resilience-Based Organizing effective:

1. "What you feed grows."

If all we do is fight against what we don't want, we will learn to love the fight. And we'll only have longing for our vision. Longing isn't good enough and does not achieve the world we need and want.

If ecological collapse is rooted in the exploitation of our labor, the first rule of ecological restoration is to restore our labor: to put it back to use serving our communities, not the concentration of wealth. This shift is what we must feed.

2. "If it's the right thing to do, we have every right to do it."

This basis of revolution is not struggle. The basis of revolution is rights. It is when a people (or peoples) are organized enough to assert their rights that we can test the legitimacy of existing authority. The only way to assert rights is to exercise them. Our actions must assert 2 new rights:

* The Rights of Mother Earth. The rights of rivers to run free, for water to not be polluted, for human communities to not be forcibly displaced, etc. That these rights trump corporate power.

* The rights of peoples to what is required for productive, dignified, and ecologically sustainable livelihoods.

3. "If we are not prepared to govern, we are not prepared to win."

Our actions must assert the right to directly and democratically meet our own needs, the right to self-govern – and in doing so, expose and denounce the existing laws and structures set up to concentrate power and wealth in the hands of the few at the expense of the collective needs of the many. We must remake the very shape of governance to be more democratic and ecologically responsive.

From Transformative Justice as the self-governing alternative to policing and prisons, to cooperative businesses and community land-trust housing – we can demonstrate that our ability to self-govern is better than the state's capacity to govern.

4. "If it's not soulful, it's not strategic."

We must lead with vision, and our vision should nurture our cultures, spirits and souls - through song and ceremony; through practice and play. Our movements must be irresistible and rooted in the wisdom of our ancestries. This is how we heal from the crisis of disconnection. Our actions must also paint an irresistible vision of the future for people - one based not on our fear of the worst, but rather a bold vision of a future, (the *buen vivir*) worth fighting for.