



2021 Hunger Free Communities Virtual Summit

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Empowering Stakeholders to Reclaim Our Democracy

Sam Daley-Harris, Founder and Principal

Civic Courage



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Why did you choose this session?

**Empowering Stakeholders to
Reclaim Our Democracy**

What do you hope to get out of it?

Let's hear from a few folks.



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Transactional Advocacy vs. Transformational Advocacy

Transactional Advocacy: Sign the petition, transaction complete

Transformational Advocacy: Advocates are trained and encouraged to do things they never thought they could do and, as a result, see themselves in a new light, they see themselves as community leaders.



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My story of self From hopelessness to action

Help your stakeholders clarify and share why they do
this work

...in a meeting with an elected official, in a letter to
the editor, in conversations with other stakeholders



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Interview: “It’s hard to have a good reason to invite our elected officials if we’re not opening a new site.... They get behind us once we meet in person.”

Sam: Elected officials represent you and your clients. It’s their job to meet with you. In most cases your elected officials and newspaper editors hold you and your work in high esteem. (Returned Peace Corps op-ed example. What is an op-ed?)



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Interview: We've focused more on clients being advocates, not much on volunteers being advocates.

Sam: Let's hear from you: Do you do very little advocacy, focus only on advocacy by clients, something else?



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Optimism is a political act. Those who benefit from the status quo are perfectly happy with a large population of people who think nothing is going to get any better. In fact, these days, cynicism is obedience. What's really radical is being willing to look right at the magnitude and difficulty of the problems we face and still insist that we can solve those problems.

Alex Steffen



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....Our real problem is not a heating planet or rampant malnutrition.... We only have one real problem: our own feelings of powerlessness to manifest the solutions right in front of our noses.

Frances Moore Lappé
Getting a Grip2



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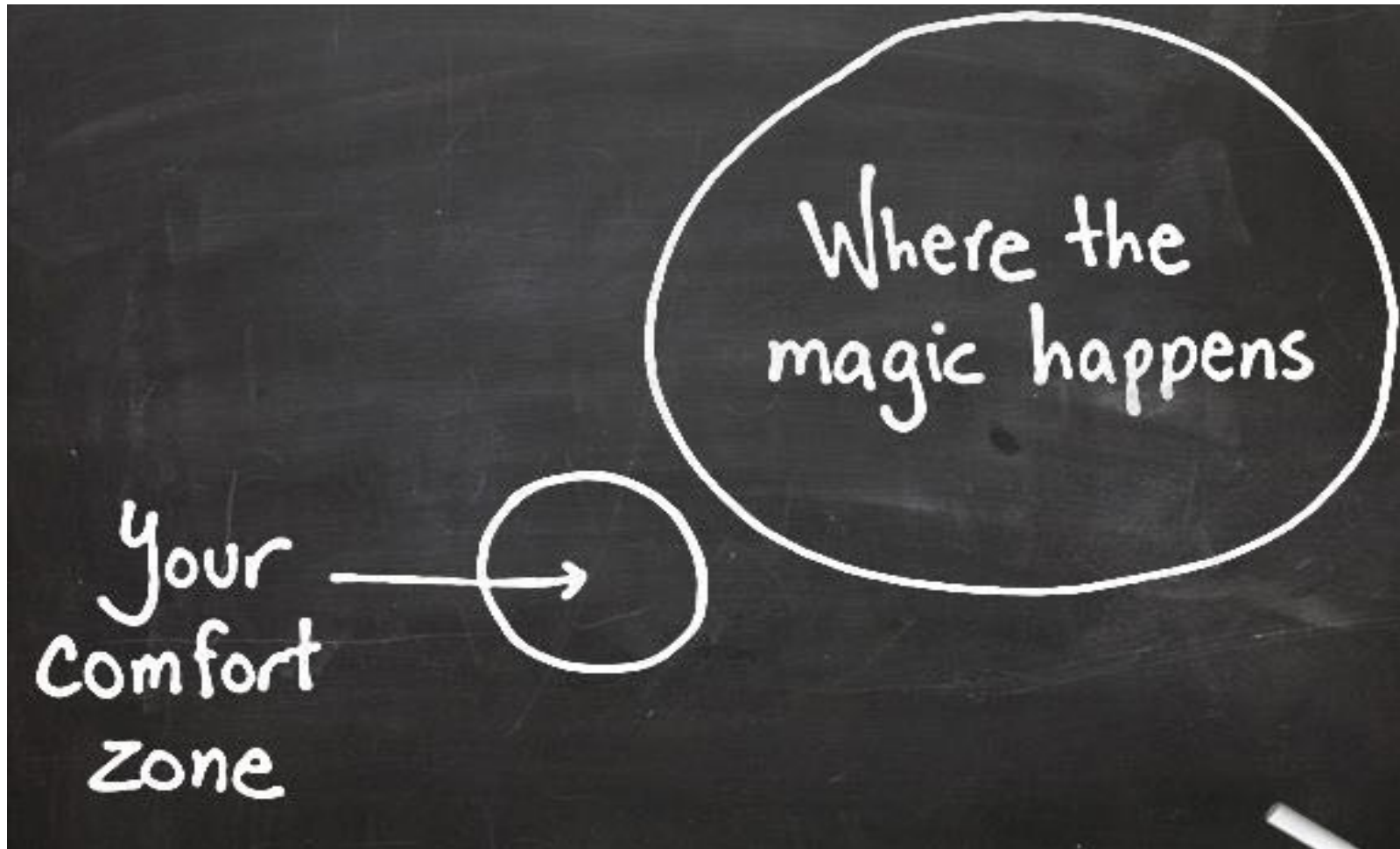
Op-ed: How do you dissolve the sense of powerlessness? How do you build confidence? Find an organization that is:

- 1.) committed to dissolving your powerlessness,
- 2.) centered on providing you with new skills and
- 3.) focused on encouraging you to move out of your comfort zone. That's right, confidence grows when you're encouraged to do something you thought you couldn't do and surprise yourself when you make it happen.



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I'm not saying that your organization should

- 1.) Dissolve all the powerlessness around politics (or)
- 2.) Provide all the new skills (or)
- 3.) Constantly encourage stakeholders to move out of their comfort zone.

But how can you take the next step? Is it by partnering with an advocacy group that can bring in those skills? Here's an example of what I mean.



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The Covid Supplemental was passed in the Senate on Saturday March 6, 2021 and included the Child Tax Credit (CTC) providing \$250-\$300 per month per child, but only for one year.

Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH), one of the CTC leaders, came off the Senate floor and jumped on the **RESULTS** monthly conference call and said "I've been in the Senate for 14 years and today was my best day in the Senate."



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“It has to pass in the House next and then be signed by the President, but as soon as the ink is dry we will start working to make it permanent.”

In early March, Sen. Brown circulated a sign-on letter on making the CTC permanent and two weeks later had 17 Senate signers and said we’re going to close the letter by the end of the week. **RESULTS** groups went all in and played a key role in getting 24 more Senate signers in 4 days bringing the total to 41 Senators signing the letter to leadership.



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Afterward, Sen. Brown's key staffer wrote this to
RESULTS: "Someone said to me this morning, 'I can't believe you went from 17 [signers on] Monday to 41 on Thursday.'

"That doesn't just happen. It is thanks in large part to your persistent efforts. Another office said to me, 'You sure do have an army behind you.' "And he was right. Thank you again."



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What kind of difference would it make for the families you serve to receive \$300 per month for each child under 6? What kind of contribution would that make toward making your community a hunger free community? Can you see why advocacy on something like the Child Tax Credit is so important to your work, your vision, and to the families you serve?



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Could your organization be linked to a national advocacy organization like **RESULTS** or **Bread for the World** that could, through their local volunteer leaders and/or through national staff, bring in the training and the encouragement and the timeliness needed to get to transformational advocacy?

[Introduce Ken Patterson: kpatterson@results.org]



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Again, I'm not saying that your organization should

- 1.) Dissolve all the powerlessness on politics (or)
- 2.) Provide all the new skills (or)
- 3.) Constantly encourage stakeholders to move out of their comfort zone.

But how can we take the next step? Is partnering with an effective advocacy organization the way to go?



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Here's a common view of most groups doing advocacy work, groups that are **not** really up for dissolving the powerlessness:

We can't let our volunteers write letters to the editor or op-eds because they'll get it wrong and misrepresent the organization....



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Citizens Climate Lobby

	2010	2019
Letters/op-eds pub.	65	4,305
Number of groups	14	465
Congress/staff mtgs.	106	1,714
Conf. attendance	25	1,500

CCL volunteers enrolled 45 Republicans and 45 Democrats in joining the House Climate Solutions Caucus



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Interview:doing an op-ed is a nice element to build on.

We can't let our volunteers write letters to the editor and op-eds because they'll get it wrong and misrepresent the organization.



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Possibilities for a contributed training

- Writing letters to the editor that get published
- Writing op-eds and getting them published
- Planning a meeting with an elected official
- Champion scale: moving electeds from opposed to champion
- Partnering with an effective advocacy organization to get to transformational advocacy



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How to join Civic Courage List

<https://civiccourage.org>

**Ken Patterson, Dir. Grassroots
Impact, RESULTS**

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Champion Scale

Opposed: I think we can agree that the farthest you can get from being a champion on our issue is being opposed. A member of Congress or other elected officials who are opposed might say, 'I don't support that,' or 'my constituents wouldn't support that,' or 'what you're talking about isn't even a problem,' or 'I agree that it is a problem but I can't support your solution.'



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Neutral or Uninformed: The next level up from opposed is neutral or uninformed. Someone who is neutral might say, 'I need more information,' or 'can you explain it to me more fully,' or 'could you give me materials to read so I can make a more informed decision?'



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Supporter: The next level up from neutral is supporter. A supporter might say, 'I'll co-sponsor that,' or 'I think that is a good solution and I can get behind it.'

Advocate: The next level up from supporter is advocate. An advocate might say, 'now that I'm a co-sponsor I think it is important to build support for this,' or 'I am going to talk with others in Congress about supporting it,' or 'Could you help me draft an op-ed for our paper so we can educate my constituents?'



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Leader and Spokesperson: The next level up from advocate is a leader and spokesperson. A leader and spokesperson might be the lead sponsor on a bill or the initiator of a sign-on letter or a caucus on our issue.

Champion: The final level is a champion. I don't like it when groups cheapen the term champion and call anyone who does *anything* good a champion. A champion is someone who is so



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passionate, that they are out in front of our organization and pushing us to catch up. They might say 'I have arranged for 5 of my Democratic Colleagues and 5 of my Republican colleagues to host town hall meetings on hunger free communities and I need your help finding speakers for some of those 10 cities.' Or they might say, 'I want to introduce legislation on making our state a hunger free state and I'd like to work with you on that.'



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This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one, the being a force of nature, instead of a selfish, feverish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy. I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community, and it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work, the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no brief candle to me, it is a sort of splendid torch which I've got a hold of for the moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.

Man and Superman, George Bernard Shaw