

Movement Analysis: Two Tools

(description by Marybeth Gardam, Nancy Price, and Darien De Lu)

Two tools for analysis are used by social change groups to provide needed clarity before diving into a project or proposal. These two tools help analyze aspects of an organization, a campaign, or a project in order to develop a strategic framework and an action plan.

Issue comm. work on each particular issue comm. topic actually entails organizing a *social movement* for change in regard to that topic. But what does that really mean? What might — what *can* — your committee (and WILPF) contribute to making that needed change happen?

The first tool is an analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats — “SWOT”. Although this type of analysis was first developed for use in the marketing/advertising business, it now is used frequently by activists and social change groups, because it has proved to be so helpful. The point of this kind of analysis is that — in considering a topic, project or proposal — it is important to systematically discuss what it is that you wish to do and accomplish from the point of view of these four considerations.

You look at two contexts in identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for what you are proposing. First is the context of the *internal* environment: your issues committee and your members. Additionally, you can apply SWOT to the *external* environment of the community, regional, and national situations: what other groups are doing, the political climate, etc.

The second tool is the Movement Action Plan (which addresses the *evolution* of a movement or “the Movement Arc”). You can read about it in detail at: <https://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/moyermap.html>. Movement activist Bill Moyer published his “History Is a Weapon: The Movement Action Plan: A Strategic Framework Describing the Eight Stages of Successful Social Movements” back in spring 1987. Moyer’s framework was based on the experiences of the Clamshell Alliance activists a year earlier, when they occupied the Seabrook, NH, nuclear power site and spent the next 12 days in jail. (The Clamshell Alliance was considered a prototype of new movements.)

Moyer laid out the Eight Stages of Successful Social Movements in his movement map. In his analysis, he addresses three fundamental social movement considerations:

1. What are Social Movements
2. The Need for a Strategic Framework
3. The Movement Action Plan Map of Eight Stages (from the perspective of two distinctive views of power: Social Movements Strategy vs. Power Holder Strategy)

With this tool, you'll have a much better understanding of the eight stages, *where* your project/proposal is within those stages of the movement arc, and what you need to do— for ultimate success — to *move* from one stage to the next, and *how to maintain your success*.

For each stage there is a clear and concise discussion, using the anti-nuclear energy movement up to the 1990s as an example. Moyer analyses all the components: the power holders, the opposition, the public, the movement goals, and the pitfalls.

The Movement Action Plan makes for fascinating reading and will further your understanding of how to think strategically and systematically!

Which stage do you *think* your issue is in?

Stage One: Normal Times

Stage Two: Prove the Failure of Institutions

Stage Three: Ripening Conditions

Stage Four: Social Movement Take Off

Stage Five: Identity Crisis of Powerlessness

Stage Six: Majority Public Support

Stage Seven: Success

Stage Eight: Continuing the Struggle

Read the Action Plan to discover if your assessment holds up!