

Organising vs mobilising

People often conflate organising with mobilising.¹ While they are connected, they demand different strategies.

Organising means bringing people together to find common ground around a shared injustice and problems. Through dialogue (or popular and political education process), they build political relationships and consider solutions that become a specific demand or forward-looking agenda over time. Organising happens in phases. It might start with loose formations but ultimately seeks to widen, multiply, and diversify the people who come together through alliances and networks with a sense of belonging, shared vision, and values that are key to movements. Organising can happen face-to-face or – especially in dangerous contexts – virtually or both. Many activists frame the challenge of organising as “How do we build our base or constituency?”

Mobilising refers to sets of actions taken to activate and expand supporters through outreach to garner attention and to pressure for change using the power of numbers and virtual as well as face-to-face actions.

Mobilising tends to be short-term and tactical while organising means investing in leadership and skills, including the capacity to mobilise.



Organising isn't rocket science, but it is a serious skill and a craft. A good organising conversation [is] 70% listening and 30% talking. It is not Facebooking, it is not tweeting ... those are mobilising tools.”

– Jane MacAlvey and Michael R, Jacobin.²



We can't lose connection to the human part of this work: our human connections and humanity. The worst is when we feel alone and isolated. A call, a conversation matters. Alliances matter. We are not alone. We are all connected.”

– Miriam Miranda, Honduran activist

¹ Distinction attributed to Jane MacAlvey, US labor educator and organiser, in [Building a Revolutionary Movement](#).

² “The Big Difference Between Organising and Mobilising: How Unions Can Win in the Future” Altnet, October 21, 2015.