



Our Journey to Zero

Stories of hope and success

How campaigners are building powerful, successful campaigns to tackle the climate crisis and move emissions to zero

WELCOME

We're so excited you're here.

We started this journey because we noticed lots of campaigns around the world are making real progress on climate change using the 'net zero' concept. Which is interesting – because before the Paris Climate Conference in 2015, net zero was mostly talked about by long-term climate activists and scientists. Since then, it feels like it's popping up all over the place, from corporate reports to government speeches.

To help keep up the momentum, we set about building this guide. We sought to understand and document how powerful activists are using the net zero concept to strengthen, focus and plan their campaigns. We came to it with a little skepticism because, let's face it, there are so many terms, definitions and abbreviations thrown about in climate change circles. But as we built this guide, we became positively enthusiastic about how net zero can focus and guide our campaigning, helping to pile the pressure on those in power to make the right decision now.

Treat this document as you would a cookbook – we've written it so you can dip in and out of chapters, take inspiration from various bits, put it down, and come back to it down the line.

For us, this is just the beginning. We're hoping to update this document regularly based on your feedback, ▶

◀ contributions and ideas. We'd love your thoughts on what's good, what's missing and how we can improve via this quick optional survey:



OPTIONAL SURVEY

If you'd like to get your campaign added to the next version that's awesome, let us know through the same form!

Finally, we're delighted to be able to fund powerful activists around the world who are building courageous, powerful campaigns for change. To find out about them, and hear about future grant programmes we'll be running, head to <https://attainable.co/zero>.



ATTAINABLE WEBSITE

Thank you, the Attainable.co team.

A NOTE ON SAFETY

As we've prepared this document we interviewed a lot of people. Being an activist can be dangerous, so we've been careful to avoid putting anyone at risk by, in some cases, changing people's names, and the name and/or location of their work.

LANGUAGES

This document is available in a variety of languages, including Indonesian, Portuguese, Spanish and English. We are working to get more languages included, so check for your language on the Attainable website or get in touch if you think we should provide a translation for your language.



ATTAINABLE WEBSITE

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WITH IMMENSE THANKS

This document would not have been possible without the immense support, guidance and encouragement from dozens of people around the world. We are not able to thank them all, for safety reasons, but we'd like to warmly thank everyone who took their limited time and energy to share their thoughts, critiques and ideas. We are indebted to you.

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SO WHAT EXACTLY ARE NET ZERO, 1.5 DEGREES AND NDCS?

Campaigning on climate change can quickly become a quagmire of definitions, abbreviations, and confusion. We've tried to avoid that in this guide, and thought it would be helpful to start with some key terms and the definitions we find useful.

NET ZERO

A term that generally means net zero greenhouse gas emissions. As the [UN](#) says, 'Put simply, net zero means we are not adding new emissions to the atmosphere. Emissions will continue, but will be balanced by absorbing an equivalent amount from the atmosphere.'

The concept has been around for a long time, and took a huge step forward in 2015 when some concepts related to net zero were included in the [Paris Agreement](#).

Another key moment in the history of net zero was the IPCC special report in October 2018, which established the concept of 'net zero by 2050' as the scientific standard. Today, it is widely accepted ▶

◀ as what humanity needs to do if it's going to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees. For more on the story of net zero, see this [detailed excellent history](#).

1.5 DEGREES

Why 1.5 degrees? As the [BBC explains](#), '1.5 degrees Celsius has become the new "safe" upper-limit for global warming after many years of campaigning by activists and policy makers.'

And the [New York Times says](#), 'The Earth has already warmed 1 degree Celsius (1.8 degrees Fahrenheit) since the 19th century. Now, a major new [United Nations report](#) has looked at the consequences of jumping to 1.5 or 2 degrees Celsius.'

NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTIONS

[NDCs](#) are at the heart of the Paris Agreement, and are key to achieving the Agreement's long-term goals. NDCs represent efforts by individual countries to reduce their emissions and adapt to the effects of climate change.

THE PARIS AGREEMENT

A legally binding international treaty on climate change. It was adopted by 196 countries at COP 21 in Paris on 12 December 2015, and entered into force on 4 November 2016. Its goal is to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees, preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels. [Read more here](#).

COP 21

The 21st session of the Conference of the Parties, which took place in Paris in 2015. The Conference of the Parties is the name for the decision-making body responsible for monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). [Read more here](#).

THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE (IPCC)

Brought together by the United Nations to provide objective information to help us understand the scientific basis of the ▶

◀ natural, political and economic risks of human-induced climate change, and possible ways of responding to it.

The UNFCCC

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change entered into force on 21 March 1994. Today, almost every country in the world is a member. The 197 member countries are called Parties to the Convention. Preventing 'dangerous' human interference with the climate system is the ultimate aim of the UNFCCC. The Convention is the parent treaty of the 2015 Paris Agreement.

JUST TRANSITION

A just transition is both the outcome – a fairer, greener future for all – and the process that must be undertaken in partnership with those affected by the transition to net zero. It supports a net zero and climate-resilient economy in a way that delivers fairness and tackles inequality and injustice.

SOME CAMPAIGNING TERMS

To start, we wanted to share our understanding of a few key terms often used by campaigners. Most of these terms have a variety of definitions in different countries and communities, so we have done our best to choose simple, universal, definitions:

CAMPAIGN

A sustained effort at a specific social justice goal. For example: a campaign to end the use of the internal combustion engine (as used in petrol and diesel powered cars). [Read more here.](#)

CAMPAIGN GOAL

A measurable thing that the campaign will change. For example, 'to ban the sale of petrol and diesel powered cars by 2030'.

CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

'A plan to make change happen'. For example, 'to build grassroots pressure across the country, to persuade politicians to support a law to ban petrol and diesel powered cars'.

CAMPAIGN TACTICS

The actions that put your plan into practice, to help achieve your campaign goal. For example, writing letters to local politicians, or going to meet local politicians and persuading them to support your campaign. ▶

CAMPAIGN TARGET / DECISION-MAKER

The person or people who usually have the power to make the decision you need to bring about change. It may be the CEO of a company, or the prime minister/president of a country. Or an anonymous bureaucrat you've never heard of.

As we've written this paper, we've generally avoided talking to people who are campaigning without a clear goal in mind: because that's often unproductive. If you can't explain the change you hope to see, you'll never know if you're making progress towards that goal.

WHY NET ZERO MATTERS IN OUR CAMPAIGNS

Net zero is a bold goal. Since the Paris Agreement was signed in 2015, it's been talked about more and more.

We think the surge in interest is for three key reasons:

- If we can get to net zero quickly, we stand a chance of stopping the worst effects of climate change.
- It is a useful target to focus minds: for politicians, campaigners and everyone else. It allows us all to think about what changes we need to make to reduce our net emissions to zero.
- It seems to be working. In a number of countries around the world, net zero has been proven to have a big impact on campaigners, policy experts, business leaders and politicians.

We're not saying it's perfect, by any means. ActionAid did a fantastic report in 2020, 'Not Zero'¹, which: ▶

1 <https://actionaid.org/publications/2020/not-zero-how-net-zero-targets-disguise-climate-inaction>



Highlights concerns that many governments and corporations are jumping on the bandwagon and declaring "net zero" climate targets.

These announcements might sound like they signify ambitious climate action. But unfortunately, the "net" in "net zero" is being used to green-wash weak climate targets, and could end up driving huge land grabs, particularly in the global South.

Instead of accepting "net zero" targets at face value, civil society and media must scrutinise these announcements to assess whether they signify real climate action.

Oxfam agreed, warning in August 2021 that:

governments and companies are "hiding behind unreliable, unproven and unrealistic carbon removal schemes" in order to hit targets.²

They're of course 100% right: making a declaration of net zero without backing it up with a real plan isn't going to help us tackle the climate crisis.

Some people also say net zero isn't enough. Shouldn't we go net-negative³ sooner? Others highlight that it's not fair that rich countries were able to industrialise powered by high-emitting fossil fuels, and that those countries should pay for other countries to find their own greener course.⁴ They're right, and it's good to see that more and more politicians agree, ►

² <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-58079101>

³ Net-negative: the reduction of an entity's carbon footprint to less than neutral, so that the entity has a net effect of removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere rather than adding it <https://www.edie.net/definition/Carbon-negative/21>

⁴ During the period of industrialisation, fossil fuels fueled the economic growth of wealthy nations in the 19th and 20th centuries, while colonisation left many countries in the global South largely impoverished. Today, there is a growing recognition that the burning of oil, coal and natural gas has warmed the planet to dangerous levels, and thus fossil fuel use must decline to curb climate change. But at the same time, many people today live in extreme poverty, especially in developing countries. And science still shows that fossil fuels are one of the cheapest ways to fuel economic growth, so it is often seen as unfair to deny countries in the global South their use at the expense of poor people, even though the wealth of the global North was built on it.

◀ including UK Prime Minister and leader of the COP26 host country Boris Johnson, who said in September 2021:

Richer nations have reaped the benefits of untrammelled pollution for generations, often at the expense of developing countries... As those countries now try to grow their economies in a clean, green and sustainable way we have a duty to support them in doing so – with our technology, with our expertise and with the money we have promised.

The interviews in this guide have led us to conclude that net zero is best seen as a guide-star, that will help us all push decision-makers to make the big, bold, decisions we need to rapidly tackle the climate crisis. But, to be most useful, we as campaigners need to push those in power to:

- **Commit to net zero by 2050 ASAP** because the science says we don't have time to lose.
- **Find a fair, equitable, inclusive and sustainable path to net zero** because we need to achieve net zero in a manner that builds fairer societies and accounts for historical injustices.

If you're not yet convinced net zero can be a helpful concept for campaigners, here are some important words from Brazil and the UK:



SPOTLIGHT: BRAZIL

A collective goal is an achievement that activists can build on

'I know it was pretty difficult for many countries to accept the notion that we should have a collective goal like net zero. I think having net zero is absolutely crucial, and already a big collective achievement. ▶



Illustration: Clara Candelot

◀ *I find it super exciting to see that this goal has already been established and has become a reference for businesses and activists all over the world. Now a lot of people, much more than ever before, are creating their own targets around it. I think that's absolutely unbelievable. I would say five years ago I would never have expected that to happen so quickly.'*

Natalie Unterstell, Talanoa

CHAPTER 1

MAKE IT RELATABLE

We've really enjoyed talking to activists from around the world about how they've used net zero in their campaigning. One key theme that resonated across many of our interviews was the need to break a net zero goal down to something relatable to everyday life.

This great example comes from South Africa:



SPOTLIGHT: SOUTH AFRICA

Touch on people's concerns and sensitivities about air pollution

In South Africa, energy is a key concern for climate activists. Coal provides 80% of South Africa's electricity needs, which results in very high air pollution and carbon emissions.

A challenge for South African campaigners is to find a way to make any campaign interesting and relatable to everyday people. ▶

Happy Khambule explains Greenpeace Africa's approach:

'When we look at air pollution as a problem caused by the power industry, we start by looking at what the science says. Where is the data that allows us to geographically map the impact of air pollution caused by the power industry?'

Then we try to interpret the data and find a way to make it relatable to someone who doesn't think about climate change all the time. We do this by, for example, asking a health professional to explain what the health implications would be of a specific high rate of air pollution.

But we know that the raw data and a doctor's opinion alone won't win the campaign. So we go to people in the affected area and listen to what they say, and try to understand how the pollution makes them feel. ▶



Illustration: Nick Phaba

◀ *This approach helps us touch on different aspects of people's concerns, worries and sensitivities about air pollution.*

When we go to talk to politicians and policymakers, we've found that they are really interested in big diagrams that show the real problems caused by air pollution, and how local people feel about that pollution. We've learned that the people you want to support your campaign want to hear the story more than the policy. This is key: those in power need to understand the real-world impact of pollution, and your task as a campaigner is to find a way to get the voices, concerns and hopes of local people in front of them.'

Happy Khambule, Senior Greenpeace Africa Political Advisor, South Africa

An excellent example also comes from India: ▶



SPOTLIGHT: INDIA

Air pollution for proxy campaigns

Avijit, from a campaigning group in India, shared their experiences:

'We don't see ourselves as experts on climate change. We see ourselves as experts in communicating important issues in a way that the general public understands.'

Once we've created that awareness, we can mobilise them to demand change from the appropriate decision-makers. ▶

◀ *If you look at rural India, where most people are farmers and live close to nature, they see that climate change is happening today, but they don't know why it's happening.*

In urban India people are more disconnected from nature, so most of them don't see climate change as a problem. Maybe a few people have heard about it, it's been talked about, but they're not thinking about it as a daily issue.

Awareness of climate change varies according to age too, we've found that the main audience for whom climate change is a word you can use, and they understand it quickly, is under 25 years old.

We have found that the climate issue is very difficult to communicate in India. So we did some testing to find what motivates people to want to get involved with climate change campaigns. We found we were best able to talk about air pollution and its impact on individuals' and children's health. So we focused on two main issues:

One is transport, and this is basically about sustainable mobility, specifically focusing on cities to create more non-motorised transport, more public transport, more electric vehicles, and charging infrastructure for electric vehicles. People understand that these steps will reduce air pollution. The benefit this has for reducing carbon emissions is a helpful side effect, it's not the main focus of the campaign.

The other campaigns are about solar energy. We've had most success engaging bureaucrats at the local, city and state level, running campaigns that encourage local decision-makers to prioritise investment in solar energy. Again, this isn't a campaign just in favour of net zero, or reducing emissions, but it helps build a path to net zero, and shows that real change is possible.'

Avijit Michael, Managing Trustee & Executive Director, Jhatkaa.org

And another from Earthlife Africa:



SPOTLIGHT: SOUTH AFRICA

Empower People To Use Their Own Voice

'We know that every community has a different level of understanding of the factors that cause them to see climate change in their community. If you live near a coal-fired power plant, it doesn't mean you're directly affected by visible pollution. But if there is a coal-fired power plant in your area, there will be emissions – and what does that mean for your health? What does that mean for your soil and drinking water? What does that mean for the environment around you? We've found that these are the entry points of how we connect the power plant and the climate issue with accessibility to clean water and biodiversity in the community. And what we've also been using lately is intergenerational conversations where the richness of biodiversity, the richness of people's cultures and traditions come up, and so we can connect them to the larger issues of climate change, and draw on the expertise of their elders and ancestors.'

Makoma Lekalakala, Earthlife Africa

BOTTOM LINE



Mobilising people on climate change can be tough. It's a huge issue, driven by many complicated things. It's natural as a campaigner to try and get people to engage in the whole issue, all the time. But that won't help you reach your goal.

We found these examples so exciting, inspirational and real: of course it makes sense that it's powerful and impactful to break down a topic so it relates to everyday life. Then, people who haven't had the time or space to think about climate change can join the campaign, and walk with you.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH, REFLECT, BE REACTIVE AND EXPERIMENT

We loved our conversation with activists in Indonesia, about how they tackled a challenge every campaigner knows: that sinking feeling when your campaigns are just not getting support from the public.

Change.org Indonesia was finding it tricky to get people engaged with climate change. So they did some detailed research, and brought all their findings together in this [great report](#). This helped them find a few potential angles for their campaigns:

- 1 National pride.** It was identified early on that being one of the places with the highest biodiversity and largest forest in the world – being a 'global lung' for the world – brings a lot of pride to citizens of Indonesia. Appealing to this sense of patriotism was effective for bringing up issues of forests, climate and ultimately net zero as a means of protecting all that the country is proud of. ▶



2 Consumer rights. When a consumer chooses to buy, say, a drink or a new car, that choice has a direct effect on emissions of climate-damaging gases. This is certainly a more urban issue, but it can be used to show clear connections to net zero and to hang campaigns on. For example, the Plastic Bag Diet movement started a campaign from the perspective of the consumer to persuade retailers and retail associations to charge for plastic bags. It ended up not only achieving that goal, but also achieving city and province wide bans on plastic bags. It's a virtuous circle: a ban significantly reduces the consumption of plastic bags, which can lead to reduced production and waste, which can reduce emissions. This highlights how a strong show of readiness from consumers can push the industry or strengthen their resolve in the right direction.

3 Deregulation. Deforestation and forest fires often involve big, powerful, national and multinational companies, who capitalise on weak law enforcement. Attempts to further deregulate them are very unpopular. Deregulation, especially laws that make it easier for companies to pass on the costs of their greenhouse gas emissions, brings a sense of deep injustice, and energises people to act.

Here's more detail, in Change.org's words:



SPOTLIGHT: INDONESIA

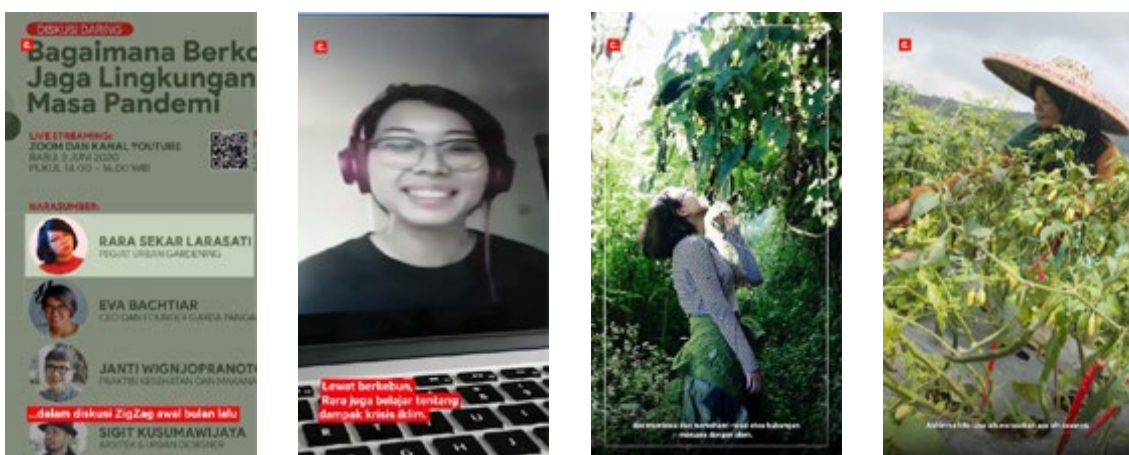
Look for a new angle to increase engagement

'We tried the angle of the food crisis. This seems to be quite a popular one. We related climate change to the actual food on your plate. We showed the sequence of cause and effect starting from climate change causing unpredictable patterns with weather, and that causes failed crops, fluctuates prices, deepening poverty for farmers, as well as the supply, price and quality of food that you are able to buy. ▶



Illustration: Graceline Manalu

- ◀ We did this campaign with an urban celebrity that is known for her environmental activism. She talked about how the weather can be so unpredictable. It's supposed to be summer, but it's been raining all week long, and the small vegetable and corn garden that she has in her backyard has completely been decimated. She then asked users to imagine that this is happening to farms all over the country, and food source becomes very very unpredictable. We found her intervention, her interest in the topic and her voice, really connected with the public, and got more people involved in the campaign. ▶



Images from Instagram showing an urban gardener, Rara Sekar.
Change.org Indonesia

◀ *The other big strategy that we always experiment with is how we react to natural disasters, because we've been getting them so often.*

We did research into how the public think about natural disasters and were surprised that people don't relate flooding (which we often experience) to climate change. This surprised us, because increased flooding is one of the most obvious links from everyday life to climate change. So we're now trying to run campaigns that show people that a long dry summer without rainfall, followed by having too much rainfall and floods, is climate change, and is something that they may want to campaign about.'

Arief Aziz, Former Country Director, Change.org Indonesia.

We enjoyed hearing from Youth Ki Awaaz, a user-generated Indian youth media platform on social justice issues, about the research they've done. It was so interesting to hear how they noticed a surge in interest in youth unemployment, and found ways to explain the link between climate mitigation and young people getting jobs:



SPOTLIGHT: INDIA

Linking everyday concerns with the wider issue

'We've been doing research to understand: what are the anxieties of young people in cities? What are the things they care deeply about, for example, jobs, and having a good career? ▶

◀ *Every year because of climate change, India's losing hundreds of thousands of jobs. Recently, there was a big unemployment debate because India touched the highest unemployment rate in the last four decades. At that point, while everyone was talking about how India has lost jobs, we brought in the climate angle, and we made a point about how if India had a proper climate mitigation strategy, we could actually build more jobs than the number of jobs we're losing every year. That found a great deal of relatability with our audience.*

Ultimately what we did was show that the local and national government is unprepared for climate change, and all the consequences it's having, and will have, for us all.

When the Covid-19 pandemic hit India, and it was so clear that the government was unprepared for all the terrible things that happened, it reinforced to people that very bad things happen when the government is unprepared.

At first we thought it would be impossible to keep talking about climate change with the pandemic hitting India, because people would be preoccupied by the pandemic. But we found that, in that moment, it was actually the perfect time to talk about climate change. Because people were getting exhausted of Covid-19 information, and they'd identified and recognised how unprepared India was when it comes to the pandemic. We saw people saying that Covid has highlighted our vulnerability and unpreparedness. And there is a bigger threat that's looming on top of us: climate change.'

Anshul Tewari, Founder, Youth Ki Awaaz

BOTTOM LINE



It's important to take time to reflect if things aren't working. Every campaigner is driven by different things, but what unites us is a hope for a better tomorrow. It's easy to be driven by urgency and impatience to run a successful campaign *right now*.

It's also easy as a campaigner to be frustrated when no one is paying attention to your issue, but both the examples above show that, even in the midst of natural disasters or pandemics, there are ways to sensitively link the immediate crisis to the longer-term disaster that is man-made climate change.

CHAPTER 3

EMPOWER PEOPLE TO USE THEIR OWN VOICE

People react best to people. But when we campaign on climate change, we can be drawn into endless technical conversations full of acronyms and technical jargon. Quite quickly it's easy to forget the human impact of climate change.

We loved talking to Earthlife Africa about their experience centering the experiences of local people:



SPOTLIGHT: SOUTH AFRICA

There's nothing more powerful than the voices of people affected

'At international climate meetings it's rare to find people talking in their native language on technical issues of long-term climate adaptation and mitigation, and what the rise in global average temperature means. But when you do find them, you hear people describing their experiences vividly. ▶

◀ *We've found it's important that people are able to raise their voices based on their own experiences and context, and then they can use that voice to shape the future they want. We spend a lot of time supporting and empowering people to come into these global climate meetings, to use their voice and experience to demand change. We do this because we've found it so powerful to bring a human face to political discourse.*

By bringing people, mainly young activists, into these spaces, we hope to build much greater activism around the institutions that are trying to tackle climate change, like UNFCCC meetings. We hope that through supporting people who are experiencing the effects of climate change to share their story, we can get more people not only talking about the human issues of climate change, but also support more people to be comfortable using the technical and scientific language often used in these spaces.'

Makoma Lekalakala, Earthlife Africa

A great example comes from Youth Ki Awaaz in India:



SPOTLIGHT: INDIA

People aren't victims – they have the right to demand change

'We start by finding hard-hitting stories of how a community that hasn't contributed to climate change is being affected by it. This is often stories of individuals from communities vulnerable to the impact of climate change, and how they lost their job or their livelihood. We find these stories work because people relate to them quickly and easily. ▶

◀ You have to be sensitive and careful though, not to position things in a way that the community is portrayed as in need of sympathy. We think there is a fine line that we always try to be on the right side of, by doing journalistic reporting of communities vulnerable to climate change, and how climate change is impacting them, without exploiting them or painting them as weak.

For example, there are these islands in India called the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. They're looked at as this majestic, beautiful holiday spot. People from places like Delhi and Mumbai go to these islands every year, and they holiday and party. But most of them have no idea about the impact climate change is having on the indigenous communities that are actually protected under law, living on these islands. And when we started talking about this, and when we started joining panels and talking about the impact on indigenous communities, we saw that the awareness of the people who holiday there definitely grew. We started getting queries from our audience saying things like "Okay, I know this now, what can I do about it?" So, we were able to help them reach a point where they wanted to take action, and they wanted to take the next step.'

BOTTOM LINE



In so many examples we've seen the same thing: even if an issue is super complicated and confusing, there will be someone experiencing it whose story other people can relate to, empathise with, and be moved to take action. This is real work: and can take time and patience, but it's so valuable because ultimately it builds the power of all our campaigns as we find ways to inspire more and more people to take real action on climate change.

Anshul Tewari, Founder, Youth Ki Awaaz

CHAPTER 4

CONSIDER MAKING THE DECISION-MAKER PART OF THE SOLUTION

It's easy, when you're planning a campaign, to imagine that the person in power you're trying to influence is negligent, corrupt or has bad intentions. But in so many cases we've seen, the problem actually is that they just don't understand why things need to change. That means your central challenge is to catch their attention. Show them that change is needed now, and show them the path to making change happen.

This is important because, if you're lucky enough to live in a country that has made a net zero commitment, you'll probably find that politicians and business leaders make all sorts of bold pledges – but then don't seem to take any concrete action. In these situations it's helpful to find ways to meet directly with those in power, and push them to take concrete action. ▶

◀ We had a great conversation with Change.org Argentina about how they built meaningful relationships with decision-makers:



SPOTLIGHT: ARGENTINA

Decision-makers as part of the solution, not the problem

In Argentina, Change.org has found it can be very powerful to allow those with power, decision-makers, to participate in a campaign. Before more actively engaging with them, they found that decision-makers often viewed campaigns as an irritation, a conspiracy or even something created by political opponents.

Change.org found that a big advantage of actively engaging with decision-makers is that they understand the campaign is made up of ordinary people – teachers, grandmothers, fathers and mothers – who see a problem and want to solve it:

'We work with them so they see the opportunity to respond or participate in petitions. And we work a lot with them and their advisors. As you know, the most senior members of the cabinet and the congressmen have a lot of advisors. So we work a lot with them to explain change.org, to explain how we can help, how they can respond to petitions and how change.org can be a way to work with these young people.'

So the basic lessons in this context shared by Leandro can be summarised like this:

'First, keep the message simple. Don't try to talk about everything or talk about all the points of the problem. But try to have a simple message to people to convince people to support your campaign. ▶

◀ *And don't try to run all tactics or strategies at the same time, but have a good timeline. For example, start the campaign with a petition, then in two months work with petition delivery in Congress, and then in parallel work with media impact, for example on radio and television or in newspapers.*

And then see the decision-makers not as the enemy. But as the people who can lead your campaign to victory. If you want success for your campaign, it can be helpful to have a meeting with that politician. Don't pass up the opportunity.'



Leandro Asensos, Country Director, Change.org Argentina

◀ We also liked this example from India, where Youth Ki Awaaz makes sure that they praise politicians when they make good decisions, which in turn allows them to put pressure on politicians in other regions to do the same. A win-win situation!



SPOTLIGHT: INDIA

The domino effect of political pressure

'One thing we've seen work really well is when a local decision-maker ends up taking a climate positive action – we spotlight their positive action and give them some praise. So, for example, when you have a village leader or a district, magistrate or local government leader who does something phenomenal, you make a positive example out of that person, and it inspires people, and they start tagging their decision-makers saying things like "Oh, why don't you do something like this?"'

Anshul Tewari, Founder, Youth Ki Awaaz

BOTTOM LINE



There are times when it's good to treat decision-makers as people you respect and want to persuade as equals. In those circumstances, think about how you can build a rich relationship with them, to help them understand the legitimate concerns you and your campaign have. The example from Argentina is a great reminder that you shouldn't always default to demanding change, sometimes building bridges is what's needed.

But always remember: sometimes the best way to win a campaign is to call out the powerful and demand change, whether they like it or not!

CHAPTER 5

BUILD POWER BY MAKING FRIENDS

Building enough power to make change happen can be hard work. The next example is from activists in Brazil who used a 'big tent' approach back in 2018 to bring together hundreds of organisations and community groups. This took serious time – two years – but was hugely impactful.



SPOTLIGHT: BRAZIL

A movement for change

'The movement was incredible. Over two years we created a multi-stakeholder process with more than 600 organisations from coast to coast, including lobbyists, solar associations, indigenous peoples, black movements, and many more.

It was organised as a very big tent where everybody could come together to discuss a long-term strategy for Brazil, and how we can implement our Nationally Determined Contribution – our national climate plan. ▶



Illustration: Clara Candelot

◀ *It took almost two years to come together. The really interesting thing was that we did it gradually, we created space for it, within the COP and within the federal government, so that at one point we had the residents of Brazil confirming the plans and requesting some changes. It was so great to have residents engaged in the process – pushing for commitments.*

It was not something that came from the outside, where people went to the government and told the government what to do. Instead, we created a mandate to do this on behalf of all Brazilians, with all the actors that should be represented. So it wasn't about electioneering, it was more about ▶

◀ *creating an arena where people could advocate for what they needed. It was the first time we talked about net zero, and at the end of the process in 2018 the then President, Michel Temer, supported the goal agreed at the Paris COP. So, it was pretty, good, but obviously not enough.'*

Natalie Unterstell, Talanoa

BOTTOM LINE



Despite the urgency of climate change, sometimes it's best to take the time needed to build trust and networks across huge groups of people. We found this example so inspiring and illuminating, it must have taken such patience and perseverance to bring together 600 groups from across the country but imagine the power of all those groups speaking as a united force. That's how change is made!

CHAPTER 6

DON'T FORGET COMPANIES

Campaigning to persuade companies to change their behaviour can be a rich and powerful experience. Unlike governments, they can be speedy, responsive, and bold. Often companies are very sensitive to anything that could affect their public reputation, which gives you, as a campaigner, a huge advantage.

We had a really fruitful conversation with Emily Hickson, Head of Advocacy and Climate Lead at the B Team, who gave some great examples of how public pressure can push big companies to find innovative ways to drive down their emissions:

SPOTLIGHT: B TEAM

Heidelberg Cement reduces emissions

'Heidelberg Cement, for example, actually developed a new industrial process for making clinker [a brick with a vitrified surface] to reduce emissions in the cement industry and shared that with the rest of the industry. We've seen the same thing in the steel industry. They're producing carbon-free steel. ▶

◀ *It's still expensive, though. But several car companies are starting to say, we're going to make electric vehicles, but only ones that use aluminium and steel made with zero emissions. So the demand side, on the industry front, is talking to the supply side and demanding these things, which is going to drive down costs. And I think that's a big breakthrough that's been made through net zero campaigns. The producers of steel and cement are seeing the huge demand side saying we need to get to net zero.'*



Illustration: Gracilne Manatu

Emily Hickson, Head of Advocacy, The B Team

The exciting thing about corporate campaigning is that, once you persuade one company to make a change, you can use that to show others that change is possible.

Industry-centered campaigns may well be accompanied by elements that focus on the demand-supply relationship between companies and consumers, and a relationship where consumers push companies to produce more sustainable products and services. And companies are starting to realise that they can create value, meaning they can make more money by producing fewer emissions.

BOTTOM LINE



Companies do not want bad press. So, we, as consumers, have huge power to demand they change their ways, and build the products we need in a sustainable way.

The examples Emily gave are powerful because they aren't issues we as consumers think about every day (who routinely thinks about whether the cement in a building was created in a low-emissions manner?). But, by finding ways to pressure companies to find ways to build eco-friendly products, we can all live more sustainable lives.

CHAPTER 7

FIND POWERFUL MESSENGERS

D Doctors are one of the most trusted professions – when they speak, most of us listen. We found this campaign in Brazil fascinating, as they found a thoughtful way to empower local doctors to explain the issues with coal mining, and the impact it was having on local health. That in turn allows campaigners to link it with a need to bring about net zero.



SPOTLIGHT: BRAZIL

Empower people who can amplify your message

'The campaign works with doctors in small towns to create a base for net zero conversations, and to connect this with what's happening in the community. They do this by having conversations with people where they ask, "What's the problem?" Then they ask, "What's the cause?" They then work with people to identify the root cause of the problem. Once people see it, the importance of net zero becomes clear.

The campaign focuses on coal, because there is so much evidence that coal mining and coal-powered electricity ►

◀ *generation is linked to health problems. The campaign brings this to life by talking about the problems and the health consequences of mining and using coal. The doctors are the ones who deliver the message that coal mining is no longer a viable option in terms of local health and climate change. They are the ones who say that it's something the local community should be thinking about, because coal mines are being shut down all over the world, so why should we try to hold on to it while everybody else is getting away from it?*



Illustration: Clara Candelot

I saw this in action a short while ago. I attended an event with 350.org, and there was a local doctor from a very small town in the middle of Brazil. He was the bearer of the message, and then there was another guy, a historian, who was researching the history of coal mines in these regions. He talked about all the labour problems and the accidents and the health problems in coal mines, and then I talked about net zero. So, net zero wasn't an abstract term – there was a bridge between community health concerns, the labour issues, and then there was I talking about why net zero matters. I was quite ▶

◀ *surprised that the people who attended were from the local area, people who would never come to a climate change event.*

This campaign really seems to be gathering power and influence. We know that local governors don't really care about net zero, but they do care about voters, and what voters are thinking about. The campaign is now putting pressure on state governors to get out of the coal business. What's driving the campaign is that people don't want to see the health problems that they have any more, and they don't want to bet on an industry that's dying all over the world and contributing to climate change and local pollution.'

Natalie Unterstell, Talanoa

BOTTOM LINE



Most environmental activists know that coal is a huge cause of climate harm. We particularly liked this example because it linked that understanding to local health issues – and who wouldn't want their local community to be healthy?

It was interesting to learn how they'd figured out a way to make the local doctor the bearer of the message: and then to link that to the local historian who informed (and perhaps reminded) people about significant labour issues in the mines. These speakers combined broke down the abstract goal (net zero) into a relatable issue that attracted new audiences who otherwise wouldn't have attended a climate change event.

CHAPTER 8

BE CREATIVE – BUT ALSO COPY OTHER PEOPLE'S ACTIVISM!

D Or to put it another way: don't be shy to be inspired by the other activism you're seeing. We were inspired to read about the 'Delhi Lungs' campaign, run by Jhatkaa, an Indian campaign group:



SPOTLIGHT: INDIA

A great idea is even better when it's shared

'In 2018 we put together interactive billboards depicting human lungs, fitted with air filters and a fan that mimics breathing, to demonstrate the impact of air pollution. It was installed in a public space first in Bangalore in January 2018, and then in two locations in Delhi in November 2018. ▶

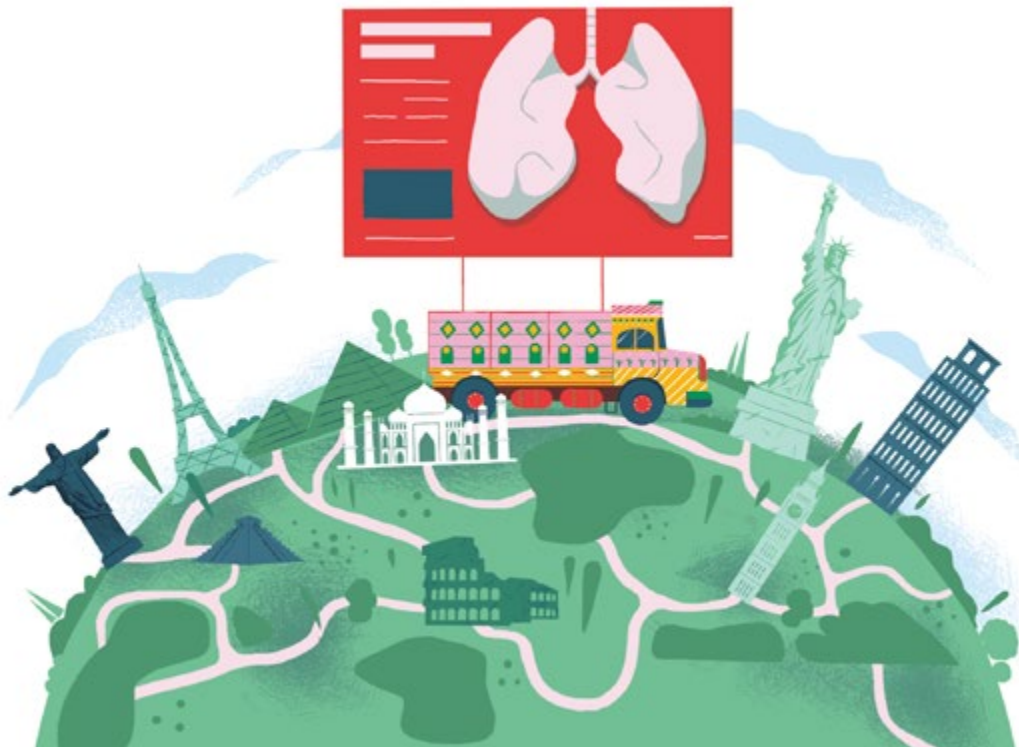


Illustration: Prince Lunawara

◀ *When the installation was put up, the colour of the lungs was white (symbolising healthy lungs). Over the next few days, the installation started to change colour to grey, and then eventually black.*

It was on prime-time TV for a week, lots of channels were showing it. And we saw a lot of links in terms of discussions about air pollution and emission sources and discussions about clean transport.

We've taken the Billboard that Breathes to many cities around the country. We open sourced the design and now it's being used all over the world.

There's a group in Poland that has set it up, and it's also been launched in Serbia and the UK. It has become a useful tool for raising awareness, used by people all over the world.'

Avijit Michael, Managing Trustee & Executive Director, Jhatkaa.org

Here's a picture of the lungs before and after the campaign:



What a difference! It really shows the terrible impact of air pollution, bringing an often abstract problem into clear focus. What we liked most about this campaign was that it clearly inspired other people to do similar things. For example, [in Poland](#).

If you want to find out more, and maybe do a similar installation, there's a great 'how-to' guide on the [Jhatkaa website](#).

BOTTOM LINE



This campaign tactic is incredibly interesting: it's creative, powerful and scary all at once.

Air pollution is scary and worrying – but also abstract. No one really knows the damage that's being done to their lungs. This installation so clearly shows the huge amount of pollutants that are being absorbed by anyone who passed that area.

We also love that other activists picked this up and tried it out in their countries. So don't be shy, if someone else has found a great tactic, feel free to copy it!

And don't forget, your work may inspire others. So don't forget to share with the world if you come up with a great tactic that works. That's an excellent way of supporting activists in other parts of the world, who may want to copy your great work.

CHAPTER 9

TAKE TIME TO BUILD POWER

One of the key ways activists win is by building power for the long term. This means you are able to keep the pressure on decision-makers until they agree to the demands of your campaign. But here's the challenge: building a long-term movement requires the love, energy and determination of lots of people.

So it's important to take the time to gradually build the power of your campaign group, by persuading new people to care about climate change, and to get active by joining your campaign.

Have a look at this example from Earthlife Africa, who are doing some really powerful movement building:



SPOTLIGHT: SOUTH AFRICA

Start small and keep it simple

' We love to work with smaller groups of up to 50 people. When we work with them, we try to simplify what climate change is and what has been done, going as far back as the Rio Summit in ▶



Illustration: Nick Phaba

◀ 1992 and how that came about. This is so that people have a good historical background into what's been going on internationally.

Then we go into what is being done, especially by governments. We focus on the most recent agreement – the Paris Agreement. But we don't call it an agreement. We say it's a pathway that gets us closer to a climate convention, and then we explain what the government is doing.

We go on further to explain what the country's national contributions are as experienced by ordinary people. In this way we try to empower people to talk about the issues from their own perspective and in their own context, without blurring the boundaries that have been drawn by institutions.

Makoma Lekalakala, Earthlife Africa

BOTTOM LINE



Campaigns are rarely won by one or two people who are right. They're won by diverse, resilient campaigns made up of lots of people from different walks of life.

So, it's important as you set about your campaign to think carefully about how to gradually build your power by attracting lots of new people, helping them find roles in your campaign.

This example was inspiring because Earthlife Africa take the time needed to really teach people about the history of climate change campaigning, and to help them locate themselves in decades of courageous activism.

CHAPTER 10

KEEP GOING AND LEARN FROM EACH OTHER



Illustration: Sebastian Gagin

T Thank you for reading this far! We hope that the stories you have read inspire you with new enthusiasm and give you plenty of ideas on how you can make change happen. Every step counts, even when it seems difficult to keep the end goal in sight. But that end goal is a cleaner, greener,

freer and more inclusive world. And it's amazing that you are here to help make that happen.

As we close this first edition of *Our Journey to Zero*, we wanted to say that we are at the very start of this journey – but we have absolutely no doubt that over the coming years millions more people will be pressuring governments and corporations to find fair, rapid paths to net zero.

As you embark on this journey, please share your stories on social media or by getting in touch with us, so that we can help others learn from your successes, setbacks and reflections.

If you need training, support, or funding for your campaign, check out the resources on our website:
<https://www.attainable.co/zero>



ATTAINABLE WEBSITE

We'll be updating the site regularly with insights, opportunities and more. And don't forget, if you want to share reflections on how we can improve this guide and what we should include in the next version, you can take our quick optional survey:



OPTIONAL SURVEY

Onwards

The attainable.co team

About Attainable

Attainable supports, connects and funds activists working on the most important issues of our time. Our mission is to find, nurture and champion campaigns that are building a healthier, fairer, safer and more sustainable world. You can find out more about our work, our research and our funding at <https://attainable.co>



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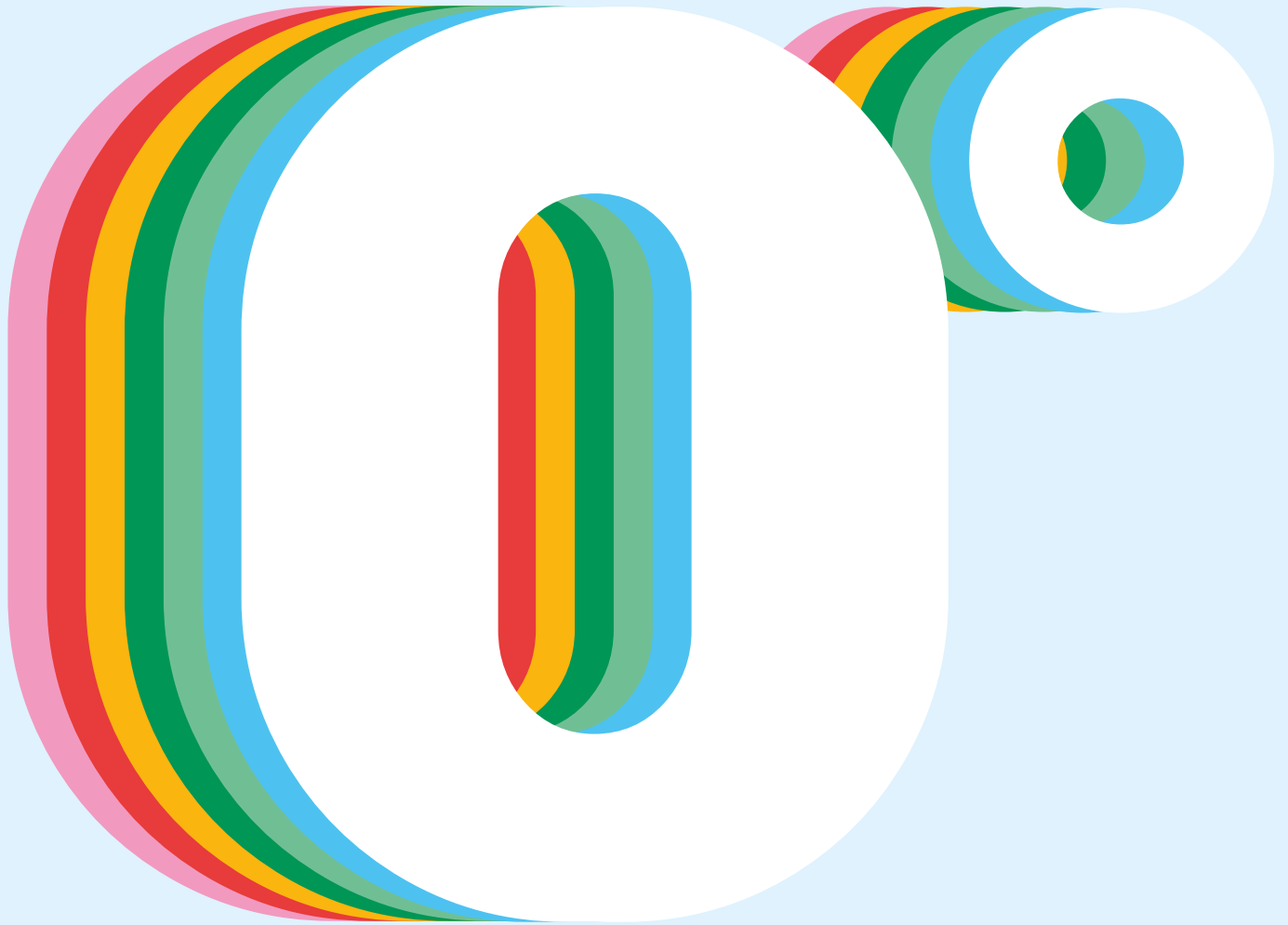
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Our Journey to Zero

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