

BRICK BY BRICK

a document of a conversation

POPULATION
DEMOGRAPHICS
DISCOURSES
HISTORIES
STATE PRACTICES
STRATEGIES
CHALLENGES, SUCCESSES

How do people you're talking to know you're talking to them?

How to get people to think differently about what they think?

Juvenile Jail — close it down and make a better place for the youth to go.
Horrible Conditions

JJPL
FFLIC
Making streets safe
Police Brutality

Put the youth's face up front, once they "see themselves" in the campaign, they identify.

JJPL Sued Youth Study Center and school board uses litigation as a strategic tool
"Using only litigation makes the system stronger"
Legal strategy also allows access to kids inside, where their voices can be brought into the campaign
Turns to kids for opinions on how things could change
Kids also start talking to one another, which also helps protect them against revenge from guards and prison administration
Raises question as to what the role of lawyers should be and whose voices drive the organizing

Draw on what already exists within the community: music, DJing, parties

"SHUT IT DOWN"

Groups of kids who've gotten out and now come to meetings and are active in the campaigns
Struggle: kids become "institutionalized" (psychologically?) and expect the violence of prison as NORMAL

If prisons are so great, then how come people in Beverly Hills aren't trying to get one?

poverty, mental health issues
Jail is overcrowded
Bad conditions — worst in the state
Trying to double the size of the "campus"
Voters have to approve referendum in two years

"Decarcerate Monroe County"

Privatization component
County population is growing
Jail with the worst conditions in the state
Class / Wealth antagonisms — spatial difference: factory workers out of work on one side of town

Southern Indiana — evangelical Red State
many political prisoners and Federal prisons

Accountability: gaps of communication and accountability across the activist community and the communities of stake-holders
RCA and Westinghouse leaving town
Other side of town is wealthy
LANGUAGE: "reframing the issue," why is the system expanding and who has power over that?

"Community in Unity"

CRNY (Critical Resistance New York)
2.5 year old effort

FREE, LOUD and VIBRANT

How to make it abolitionist rather than expansionist?
Changing narrative: "how can you create safe communities," logics of abolition

problems in the Bronx and larger NYC: Jail expansion program
one in Brooklyn, connected to a mall
on in Oak Point/South Bronx

lack of transparency in coalition
had to discuss it and go through hard steps: "It got us where we're at today"

You need the diversity of background and point of view of all the people who come together to be successful

in one of the poorest and most toxic districts in the country
the mob used to dump radioactive waste

biggest struggle is still transparency among the group

Stopped them from building the jail

Suprised how many community members were already READY for ABOLITION

Highest Asthma rates in the country

HOWEVER!

Government wants to build it somewhere else: 2 blocks away... instead of a new fish market

History of landlord negligence/violence

ideology: disguising what the prison is by calling it something else
"Youth Study Center"
"Campus"