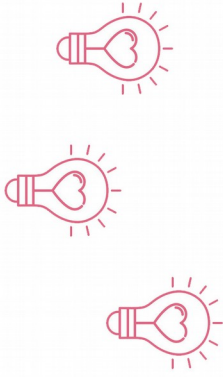




Showing up is half the battle

Activism is a group practice that you can develop over time. It can be one path among many paths that create a meaningful life or one that guides and structures your entire life. Social change is also a long game. It is supported by daily actions and relationship building. Just keep showing up - this is one of the most important parts of getting started!

But whatever you choose, you'll need to work with others at some point. Individual lifestyle changes cannot address large, structural injustices!



There's no correct way, set of steps or handbook to getting involved and creating social change! One person's way of becoming involved may or may not be right for you. Be open to new things and pay close attention to what's working for you or not.

Want to see social change but don't know where to begin? This zine is for you <3



GETTING STARTED BY GETTING INVOLVED

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Series Three: Group Profiles
TBA

Series Two: Case Studies
TBA

02: Activism Culture Shock

Series One: Preparation

Mobilize Series

It's a good idea to check out what's out there before committing to a group, even if you plan to start your own. Be ready to experiment and learn!

Try to put yourself out there and get to know people.

Ask questions :)



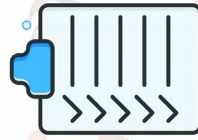
Unfold this zine for more info on different types of groups you can join! <3



Take stock of your own lifestyle, resources, knowledge and capacity and think about where they might be best applied.



How much time can I commit?



What experiences, perspectives, skills and resources can I contribute?

What would I find enjoyable and fulfilling?



Don't be discouraged when a group doesn't work out!!!



It is totally normal for you to need to build up experiences in different groups before you know what works best for you and others. Stay tuned for future zines where we'll tackle common setbacks and struggles!



As you begin your journey into social justice, give yourself time and space to set and hold your intentions <3

Make sure to check in with yourself and the people you're working with, and adapt regularly.

Working toward social change needs to include pleasure, joy, caregiving and connection!



A GUIDE TO GROUPS - remember, you can always start your own group <3

Registered charities: Good for those with minimal time and are looking to commit to clearly delineated tasks like administration, fundraising, events volunteering, or one-off projects like updating a website. Charities are not ideal for those looking for more radical actions – government/funding regulations can limit both the statements and actions a charity can take and as such, they can be more intertwined with or complicit in the very values and systems you may be trying to resist. (Ask yourself, where is funding coming from? Does this charity address root causes? What relationship does this charity have to other systems of power? How does this charity relate to the people it serves?) Examples: *Doctors without Borders, Planned Parenthood, The STOP, Maggie's Toronto*

Nonprofits: There are many types and sizes of nonprofit. Legally, they are different from charities so they cannot issue tax receipts and are not required to be non-partisan. However, they must have formal governance and policies unlike grassroots groups. If large, they may be indistinguishable from a charity from a volunteer standpoint though can be more explicit or radical in their politics. If small, they may be more similar to a grassroots experience. Examples: *Greenpeace, Lead Now, Ontario Health Coalition*

Unions: Unions vary widely and there are many ways to become involved. Larger unions may be more bureaucratic whereas smaller unions may be fluid. Unions can do much more than bargain for a collective agreement, advancing social justice in many ways. Becoming active can involve attending meetings, acting as a steward or grievance officer, joining committees or building coalitions. Rank and file members are also critical in keeping lines of communication open between leadership and other members, as well as encouraging a pro-worker culture. Hint: [You don't have to be a union member to support labour](#) – find a grassroots labour group :) Examples: *Toronto & York Region Labour Council, CUPE, Gigworkers United, Justice for Workers*

Civic Engagement: Civic engagement just means being involved in democratic political life. This can span from the minimal (voting once every four years) to being highly engaged. You can stay abreast of candidates, legislation, political donations, etc. and act independently by contacting your elected officials or attending public meetings. You can also join group actions like petitions, phone zaps and rallies - these are often organized by grassroots groups. You can also directly support a candidate or party by fundraising and canvassing during campaigning periods. Examples: *NDP, Community Civic Engagement Collaborative, Toronto Environmental Alliance*

Grassroots groups: Varies the most widely. Grassroots groups tend to have fluid membership structures, and flexibility in tactics and focus. This gives them agility and space for radical action, creativity and freedoms other groups cannot provide, but they can also be more chaotic. Power structures are often flat or undefined. Groups often aim for some form of democratic or consensus decision making – though the reality is often not so simple. Groups rely on personal connection and initiative between members, so it may take research and trial and error to find a group that you gel with and to build up the skills and experience needed to act effectively. Desirable skills include leadership, facilitation, event planning but in a grassroots group, all kinds of skill sets are needed! Actions run the gamut and can involve symbolic resistance (protest campaigns like boycotts, rallies or marches), advocacy (speaking at development consultations, or at city council meetings), direct action (blockades, disruption of construction projects), and provision of care (organizing and running community programs, food and clothing drives, intentional communes, etc.). Grassroots groups often work with other types of groups to work on coalition building and solidarity. They may partner with nonprofits, charities or unions which can provide them with organizational infrastructure and resources. Some types of grassroots groups are:

- **Mutual aid groups:** focused on providing the necessities of life to marginalized groups. May be powered by crowdfunding. Examples: *Downtown West Mutual Aid Network, Community Fridges TO*
- **Community groups:** focused on the health and well-being of a local neighbourhood. A key subgroup is tenant associations/unions wherein renters organize to improve housing conditions, sometimes even striking by withholding rent. Examples: *Kensington Market BIA, Friends of Chinatown, York South-Weston Tenants Union*
- **Social justice groups:** focused on enacting social change in a specific area of concern like climate justice or public transit. Examples: *Decolonial Solidarity, Justice for Workers, Toronto Coalition for Housing*
- **Direct action groups:** focused on more disruptive actions such as flash mobs, blockades, sabotage, hunger strikes and more. Examples: *Extinction Rebellion, Antifa*