

# PEDAGOGIES OF ORGANIZING



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by  
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Context:  
Los Angeles Teacher Strike

To advance educational justice, teacher union organizers grapple with multiple possibilities for engaging people on social issues, while being responsive in the moment.

These practices nurture common cause and identity among teachers with diverse interests, who feel empowered to take collective action.



The district is trying to cut our health care.

Uh-uh!

Everyone here seems to care about health care...

... learning about the history of teacher-led action will show that change is possible!



Last year they tried to cut our pay, but teachers put a stop to that.

That's why we need you to take action!

In January 2019, over 30,000 Los Angeles teachers marched alongside students, families, community members, and working people to take action for racial, economic, and educational justice. This action was made possible through years of organizing within United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA).



We wanted to understand the practices of Makario, a Filipino American teacher and union organizer

and how he facilitated diverse groups' learning about social issues to take action, while prioritizing marginalized peoples' interests. We call this

Pedagogies of Organizing.



As a man of Color working in a majority women workforce, I have to be mindful that women of color are leaders of this social movement.



As a person of Color teaching low-income students of Color, and as a father, I have to do something to preserve free education for all students.

The Los Angeles teacher union did many things for many years to prepare for and support teachers to take action.



recruiting members within an anti-union context



offering pre-printed and handmade signs

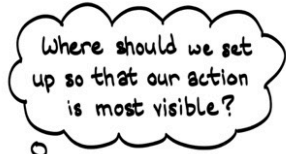


like running training meetings



and organizing food and including grassroots organizations in actions

While activities like setting up a designated meeting place before school picketing seem "ordinary", the planning and implementation of collective action require strategic thinking and deep relational work —



— which expanded public attention to social issues that impacted schools and the broader community.

OUR SCHOOLS are under attack!

What do we do?

STAND UP! FIGHT BACK!

THE UNIONS are under attack!

What do we do?

STAND UP! FIGHT BACK!



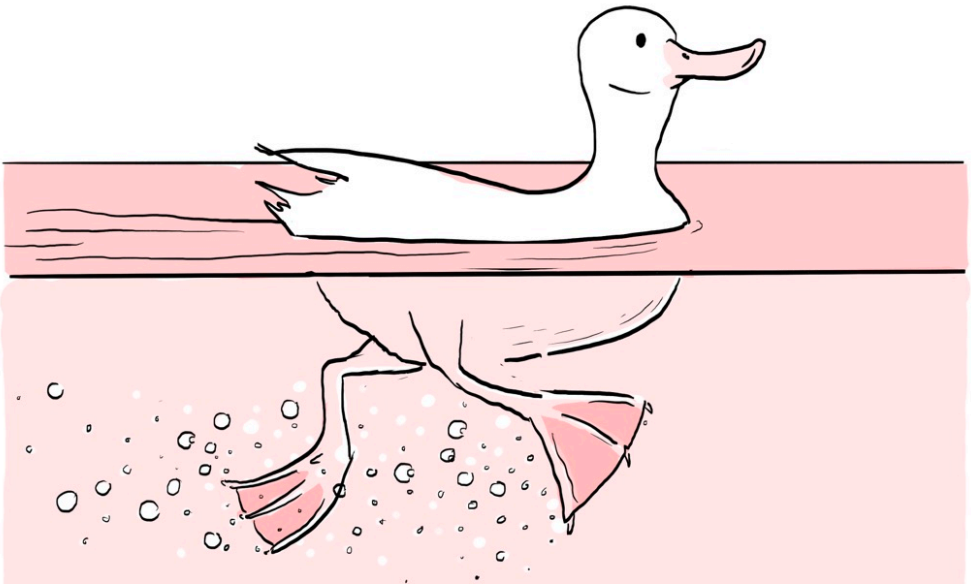


Makario often worked tirelessly behind the scenes to create the conditions for people to take action.



We don't think about these practices because they happen right under our noses!

"This action went so smoothly!"



What is our backup plan if we don't get city permits for closing down the streets?

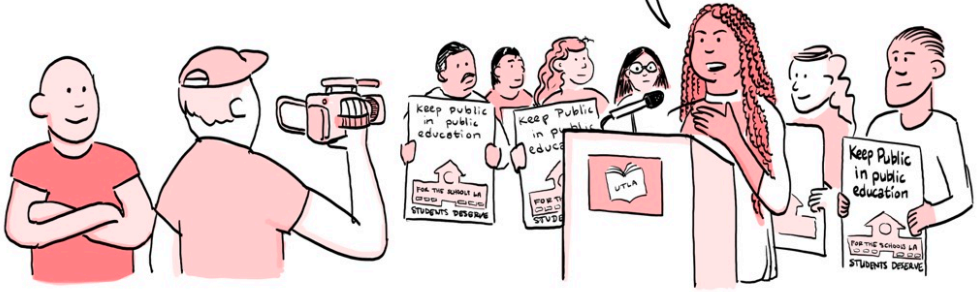
Do we have all the materials needed for the rally?

Can I find student volunteers to speak with media about our campaign?



Makario's practices included strategic recruitment of women of Color who were authentically positioned to be at the forefront of action —

I am a mother and a teacher,  
and I care about the well-being  
of our students.



— increasing the participation of  
a wide range of social movement actors.





During a day of action, union organizers like Makario are often the first ones there, and the last ones to leave.

Pedagogies of organizing are essential for facilitating people and coordinating spaces for collective action:

Time to set up the music before people come!

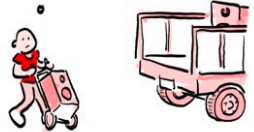


WE STAND WITH L.A. TEACHERS!



Maintaining solidarity for a shared cause is hard work!

it is intellectual and orchestrated work, and often overlooked in large action, and unwritten about in history books!



Let's honor the unrecognized and important work of teacher union organizers who have transformed the past, the present, and the future of our schools.



This comic is part of  
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To find out more about the research presented in this comic, go check out:

Pham, J. H., & Philip, T. M. (2020). Shifting education reform towards anti-racist and intersectional visions of justice: A study of pedagogies of organizing by a teacher of color. *Journal of the Learning Sciences*.

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